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Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time we take the floor during this session, we would like to begin by assuring you, Mr. Chairman, of this delegation's support for your work and that of the Bureau. We would also like to congratulate the delegation of Brazil, which will be presiding over Working Group II, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

We also want to associate ourselves with the statements that have been delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Guyana, on behalf of the Rio Group.

I do not want to make a statement that revisits the themes of the general debate. Instead, we would like to contribute in the hope of launching an interactive process, to a free exchange of ideas. We are aware that we are experiencing a time of crisis in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and in the area of international security as a whole. That is the result of various circumstances and phenomena.

First of all, there exist unilateral perceptions and a lack of political will to adequately implement various international instruments — such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — in order to launch the cut-off treaty. There is also a certain lack of commitment on the part of several nuclear Powers to provide negative security assurances that are legally binding on nuclear States.

We have noted a certain degree of reluctance with regard to making further progress in the implementation of the 13 practical steps to bring about nuclear disarmament set out in the final report of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Worse yet, the 2005 Review Conference ended with no results at all. That atmosphere of stagnation and inaction, that lack of political will, was once again reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It was in fact impossible to include in that document any language whatever pertaining to nuclear disarmament and international security.

At the same time, we have a crisis with regard to the non-proliferation regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That is obviously creating a global problem that is causing tension in relations between States and calls into question the effectiveness of established principles of collective security.

We are witnessing serious attempts to evade multilateral non-proliferation agreements, and we see with growing concern that there exists the temptation — or rather a succumbing to the temptation — to acquire nuclear technology with military potential. That temptation exists, it is affecting various States and, in one way or another, it and these technological developments — which in a certain sense

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can be considered legitimate — shatter the non-proliferation regime.

As a result of all that, the United Nations disarmament machinery is being called into question. Thus there are attempts to seek alternative courses of action. like-minded groups are attempting to compensate, albeit partially, for the lack of results in the Conference on Disarmament, in this Commission and in other multilateral disarmament forums. We have listened to a number of interesting ideas, such as that of establishing certain debate mechanisms within the First Commission or the General Assembly, which has apparently had encouraging results in Geneva.

However, Chile continues to endorse and have confidence in the possibilities and potential of the disarmament machinery. We continue to have faith in the International Atomic Energy Agency. We want to strengthen its verification regime, and that is why we urge all those States that have not yet done so to sign and implement additional protocols to their comprehensive safeguards agreements. We need to reaffirm the validity and legitimacy of the set of legal instruments that form the basis for international security, disarmament and the machinery responsible for their implementation.

After a number of years, we finally have a mutually agreed agenda, which provides us with a broad conceptual framework for action within a three-year period. Chile shares the view expressed by the Chairman in his document dated 31 March 2006, which sets out a vision of what we can reasonably hope to achieve at this session. We agree that there is a need to have realistic objectives that will enable us — at this session, we hope — to lay the groundwork for a substantive discussion.

If there is really genuine interest in making progress in this area, and political resolve to do so, we will have to demonstrate flexibility. We therefore believe that the debates in the two working groups — on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons — and the debates on reforming the Commission's working methods should be viewed and assessed according to the merits of each subject, of each exchange of ideas.

We must avoid conditionalities that will limit the progress that can be made in each of these scenarios, on each of these ideas. The requirement that "the efforts of the international community aimed at non-proliferation should be parallel to simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament" (see A/CN.10/PV.269) may be correct in theory, but it also introduces a linkage that is not helpful to us.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, we wish to point out that recent international developments show that unilateral approaches have had to give way to multilateral approaches in order to effectively address the problems related to this area of our work. That demonstrates the need for a strong multilateral system genuinely committed to disarmament and non-proliferation. But that in turn requires political will and moral commitment to implement effective measures that will produce the results we seek.

Thus far, unfortunately, we have noted on more than one occasion a certain divergence between the official statements of some and the concrete actions that they undertake. We therefore believe it is important to introduce a measure of accountability with regard to both the Conference on Disarmament and this Commission.

We want and encourage genuine and active participation by civil society in our discussions. We believe that civil society not only should observe our debates, but also should serve as an agent and a point of communication with public opinion so that the public knows what we are doing, who is taking certain actions and, frankly, who perhaps bears responsibility for the lack of concrete results.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Chile unreservedly supports the Latin American positions on that subject, which are well known. We call for greater transparency in the international weapons market. Import and export control mechanisms must be improved. Sales licenses, destination or final use guarantees and other control measures have been shown to be insufficient.

We often observe that arms embargoes imposed under the United Nations Charter are violated. At the same time, we note that weapons transfers are not always reported and that parallel and illicit markets persist. The implementation of confidence-building and security-building measures helps to create a favourable atmosphere for the control and limitation of

conventional weapons, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament.

We believe that we must move towards the gradual establishment of mechanisms for consultation and cooperation among Member States in the area of security and defence, as well as the implementation of confidence-and security-building measures. In Chile's case, I am pleased to say, such mechanisms involving our neighbouring countries are in place and actively functioning. They represent a historic qualitative leap forward of the greatest importance, given the situation in our region — particularly in the Southern Cone — only 25 years ago.

We must develop and implement new confidence-building measures to overcome traditional threats to security, but also to equip ourselves with resources and tools to confront new threats to security. Here, I wish to emphasize once again the importance and significance of the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the Mexico City summit held in 2003.

At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/92. Its objectives include strengthening the exchange of information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. In that connection, we believe it is essential to exchange information about the experiences that have been gained at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels in order to design appropriate strategies that can be applied to other regions.

We believe that the Commission's methods of work should be discussed in our plenary meetings, and we must ensure also that we allocate the same amount of time to this issue as we do to other issues we will be discussing.

The Commission currently is the only multilateral forum for debate on these crucial issues affecting international security. It is an important body, but we do not believe that it is irreplaceable. Indeed, bodies are created on the basis of need, and, when they do not meet that need effectively, they fall into disuse and disappear. We are prepared to continue our efforts to ensure that the Commission is accorded the significance and importance that it truly deserves.

Mr. Prasad (India): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and assure you of our full cooperation in your efforts to guide the Commission's work. We should like also to express our appreciation to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, the outgoing Chairman, for his contribution to forging a consensus on the agenda of the Commission. We would also like to congratulate the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, and compliment him on his thoughtful statement to the Commission yesterday.

There is a deep connection between the deficient functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the decline in the multilateral ethic in international relations. The reconvening of the substantive session of the Commission after a gap of two years to consider two important issues on the disarmament agenda is, in a sense, a reaffirmation of multilateralism. It is symptomatic of the fact that the multilateral approach, even if contested, continues to be regarded by the international community as critical to the development of norms and standards governing international relations.

The Disarmament Commission plays a unique role in the multilateral disarmament mechanism created by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I). As a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, with the same universal membership, it has the mandate to consider, and make recommendations on, issues relevant to disarmament to the General Assembly, and, through it, to the negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament. The Commission provides a platform for all States to engage in an interactive and thoroughgoing dialogue on these issues.

The task of the Commission thus is to prepare the ground for disarmament negotiations by elaborating a general approach to such negotiations. The Commission has previously been able to formulate principles, guidelines and recommendations on several disarmament issues, including those on verification and confidence-building measures. Since the Commission reaches its conclusions by consensus, its recommendations provide a useful and universally acceptable framework for all States in their endeavour to achieve their final objective: general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The Commission's first agenda item enjoins it to make recommendations for achieving the objectives of

nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. India remains fully committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be realized through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly had accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. It affirmed that its ultimate objective was the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and outlined concrete steps to achieve that objective. The Millennium Declaration in 2000 reiterated the commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to strive for the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

For India, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they intersect and reinforce each other. The very first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 1946, adopted unanimously, sought the elimination of atomic weapons from national armaments and, indeed, all other major weapons amenable to mass destruction. The present discussion concerns how to go about this task and also, in the process, deal with contemporary proliferation threats emanating both from States and non-State actors. Disarmament and non-proliferation, therefore, are not polar opposites but two ends of a single continuum.

Under the presidency of the Republic of Korea during the first part of its 2006 session, the Conference on Disarmament engaged in a focused debate on the issue of nuclear disarmament. It became evident that all States, both those that possess nuclear weapons and the non-nuclear-weapon States, remain firmly committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament. A number of issues were identified by the member States of the Conference during the debate with a view to achieving that goal. It is therefore opportune that the Commission is going to consider in some detail ways and means of achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, in order to arrive at a set of recommendations on the subject.

The Commission can carry forward discussions on nuclear disarmament and chart a possible path that provides direction for the future work of the Conference. The task of the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is to produce legally binding agreements and conventions. Although it is currently engaged in structured discussions on the issues on its agenda, its functions cannot substitute for those of the Disarmament Commission, the deliberative organ of the United Nations disarmament mechanism, which must consider issues relevant to disarmament and make recommendations to the Conference. My delegation will present India's perspectives on the steps that need to be taken to achieve the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the course of discussions in the Working Group devoted to this issue.

A basic problem afflicting the disarmament institutions and processes is the lack of trust among the States. That erosion of trust further begets a lack of willingness for mutual accommodation, making further progress on nuclear disarmament even more difficult. The absence of consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation paragraphs of the 2005 World Summit Outcome underscored the fact that currently there are sharp differences among States as to goals, priorities and approaches in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Those differences cannot be set aside or ignored. For any breakthrough to take place, all States need to sincerely engage in dialogue on their approaches to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and understand and accommodate each other's security concerns and threat perceptions.

One way to restore such trust would be to secure a reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear- weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Commission provides all States an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and to outline their positions and priorities, as well as understand the positions and priorities of others.

We are hopeful that renewed consideration of the agenda item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" will be productive this time. In revisiting this issue, addressed during the last three substantive sessions of the Commission, we should strive for the consensus that had eluded the Commission earlier. My delegation considers it useful to build on the deliberations held already in the Commission during its last cycle of work. India fully supports the adoption of confidence-building measures, whether bilateral, regional or global, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of a region.

India has initiated, both unilaterally and bilaterally, a number of confidence-building measures in its neighbourhood to built trust and confidence and to ensure greater transparency. We are committed to adopting further measures to prevent misunderstanding and promote a stable environment of peace and security with the countries in our neighbourhood. In considering this matter in Working Group II, we will outline our approach to the issue of confidence-building measures in fuller detail.

The United Nations has contributed to the development of an impressive corpus of norms and standards governing international relations, including in the field of arms control and disarmament. The Disarmament Commission has played a unique role in that and has many achievements to its credit. However, no system or institution is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. Our experience in the First Committee demonstrates that there is scope for better utilization of the resources available. My delegation therefore welcomes the fact that, in addition to considering the two agenda items, the Commission will also discuss measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of its work.

We look forward to working with other delegations for a purposive and productive session.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of our full cooperation in your efforts to guide the Commission's work. We should like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, the outgoing Chairman, for his commendable work in forging a consensus on the agenda.

My delegation thanks you, Mr. Chairman, for having convened this meeting to consider, inter alia, proposals for the forthcoming 2007 session in preparation for the final documents on our two substantive agenda items, to be concluded in 2008. We commend you for putting together ideas and strategies for the negotiations that lie ahead.

We congratulate Mr. Nabuaki Tanaka on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The United Republic of Tanzania attaches great importance to the activities of this Commission in finding effective ways to address issues and problems relating to nuclear and conventional disarmament. In essence, those problems call for further reflection on the dynamics of the global security environment and on how the international community can better use technological advancements in the military realm to enhance human development and avoid the armed conflict that is inherent in the status quo.

In that context, we cannot but acknowledge the strong nexus that exists between security, development and human rights. Although in most regions cooperation on matters relating to defence and security is becoming a common phenomenon, the scenario at the global level remains worrisome. To be sure, some progress has been made in that area, but that progress has been slow, and it seems that the dominant world strategic thinking is locked into scenarios geared to the nuclear past. However, we have a shared interest in our common security. We should be able to adopt constructive defence policies that avoid confrontation and promote confidence, transparency and broader cooperation for a safer world for all of us, beginning with a commitment to engage in deeper cuts in existing conventional and strategic force structures, as well as to scale down overall defence spending.

It is important to emphasize that the danger of nuclear and conventional strategic weapons is ominous, and that the challenges to their disarmament are enormous. Notwithstanding the danger, progress in disarmament has been disappointing. First, we are concerned about the fact that, for seven consecutive years, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to agree even on a programme to start its substantive work. Secondly, the Disarmament Commission failed last July to reach consensus on the nuclear agenda for the 2006 substantive session. We therefore hope that this time we will be able to make significant headway on that important aspect.

We ought to take a more serious approach. My delegation believes that issues relating to disarmament efforts should continue to be at the forefront of the international peace and security agenda for several years to come. We are certainly concerned about the

lack of progress in world disarmament and its dire consequences for security and development. For example, with regard to nuclear weapons, many regions have declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free zones. Yet delays in complete nuclear disarmament may incrementally increase the possibility and danger of proliferation, in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including to terrorist groups. That slackness may have adverse consequences for other areas of human security, especially in diverting resources from the global commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, set for 2015. The current rate and scale of armament is inimical to development and human security.

In that context, we cannot overemphasize the continued international efforts to strengthen and achieve universal adherence to and full compliance with effective implementation of the provisions of existing arms control and disarmament accords. Yet it is now clear that the direction of nuclear disarmament has taken a new turn since 2001. The situation is characterized by new initiatives among major Powers to compete for space-based defence systems, such as the National Missile Defence system.

Available statistics show that the global community spends $800 billion a year on military forces and keeps more than 20 million personnel under arms. But the total expenditure of the United Nations Population Fund's project to promote the right of every man, woman and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity in a total of 166 countries scarcely amounted to $225 million during 2004. Thus, it is estimated that, unless an additional $50 million a year is provided worldwide in the fight against poverty, the Millennium Goal to halve poverty and hunger by 2015 will be seriously affected. This is, indeed, an irrational and ineffective way to use our very scarce global resources.

Moreover, it is now a well recognized fact that there exists a direct link between poverty and political instability, which is exacerbated by the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Successful disarmament would remove the serious danger associated with the arms race in the areas of conventional and unconventional weapons, as well as the hazards of nuclear-waste dumping. Disarmament would also release the enormous amount of resources spent on weapons for use in other, more productive activities, relating to development and human security. That conversion is not automatic. It must be backed by conscious political will to establish and support the nexus between national and international security.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we reiterate our support and cooperation during the three-week deliberations under your able guidance.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): I would like first, on behalf of the Republic of San Marino, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Tanaka, on his appointment.

We concur with the Under-Secretary-General's statement that

> "We are meeting a particularly difficult and challenging moment for disarmament and non-proliferation and at a time of heightened international concern about weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons". (*A/CN.10/PV.269*)

The vast majority of Member States, like ours, which do not have such weapons, are powerless bystanders and witnesses in the face of a frightening display of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons. We are playing with our own and our children's lives, waiting for the first catastrophic event to happen. Nation fragmentation, international and national unrest, acts of terrorism and irresponsible government contribute to the chilling uncertainty of our collective future. Hopefully, we shall join in a reinvigorated effort which will enable us to provide guidelines for complete nuclear disarmament.

No less important is the issue concerning the reduction and regulation of conventional arms, with special focus on the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Balancing the need for self-protection with the need for transparency must be our principal task in addressing this problem.

Pertaining to the first substantive agenda item, we affirm our concern about the slow process towards nuclear disarmament. We hope for a stronger non-proliferation policy. In this respect, we strongly support the Millennium Declaration's aim of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction using all available options to that end.

Mr. Choi Hong-ghi (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to join others, Sir, in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and also in congratulating the other members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation during the course of these deliberations.

This substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is especially important because it follows a series of setbacks over the past several years to the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. As we all know, the long-standing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and the failure to complete a substantive session of the Disarmament Commission since its unsuccessful negotiations at the 2003 session have brought about a crisis of confidence in the multilateral disarmament machinery. The situation was not improved by the failure to produce an outcome document at last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), or by the failure to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1). Against this backdrop, the agreement in December 2005 on the substantive agenda of this Disarmament Commission session, which has finally brought us back to the table, was an important step forward and a welcome sign of progress.

I would now like to highlight several issues related to the substantive agenda that my delegation deems particularly important.

Despite all the setbacks and challenges to the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery, or perhaps because of them, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We have every reason to preserve and enhance the integrity of the NPT.

But the non-proliferation regime based on the NPT is faced with unprecedented challenges. There is increasing recognition that the monitoring and verification mechanisms of the Treaty need to be strengthened and improved. To this end, my delegation believes that the model additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement should be established as a new global safeguards and verification standard. Universal adoption of such protocols should be promoted. A bolstered verification system, universally applied, would increase global confidence in the compliance of States parties with their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty.

Still, no verification system can be wholly foolproof against determined proliferators. To further protect the international community from the danger of nuclear proliferation, we support the ongoing efforts to strengthen existing export control regimes and to create new supplementary measures to secure nuclear materials and technology.

Non-proliferation has its counterpart in disarmament. The disarmament obligations on nuclear-weapon States laid out in article VI of the NPT are fundamental to the full implementation of the Treaty. We welcome the progress that nuclear-weapon States have made over the past decades in reducing their nuclear arsenals, and we look forward to further reductions under the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. Nevertheless, progress in nuclear disarmament has not matched expectations set by the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. As we call on non-nuclear weapons States to strengthen their commitments to non-proliferation, the nuclear weapons States must do their part by making progress in disarmament. My delegation encourages the nuclear-weapon States to be more proactive and transparent in working towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, to ease the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, the nuclear-weapon States should provide negative security assurances to those States parties to the NPT that are in full compliance with their Treaty and other safeguards obligations.

The Republic of Korea also strongly supports the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Those steps would significantly strengthen the NPT system and lead us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the recent ratification of the CTBT by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. We urge those States that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so without delay, particularly those States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force. Pending entry into force, a moratorium should be maintained on nuclear test explosions.

As for the fissile material cut-off treaty, we welcome the plans of the Conference on Disarmament to hold a structured, focused discussion on this issue at its second session this year, in May. We hope that substantive progress will be made during that discussion, serving as a catalyst to start Conference negotiations on a cut-off treaty immediately and without conditions.

Let me turn now to conventional arms. Though we were unable to agree on a final document at the previous substantive session, my delegation notes the substantial progress that has been made on the issue of conventional arms. In this regard, my delegation fully supports the Chairman's proposal that Working Group II take up, as the basis for discussion, the fourth revision of the consolidated working paper of the previous Chairman of Working Group II, thereby facilitating the current discussion.

Confidence-building measures should begin in those areas that can be most easily achieved, moving from there to more difficult areas. Furthermore, we must be cautious not to allow a lack of progress on the most controversial issues to be an excuse for inaction in other areas. My delegation is hopeful that we can make substantial progress during this session towards an agreement on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, which could have a positive effect on our discussions of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

My Government's efforts to promote inter-Korean reconciliation can be understood in this context. We believe that mutual confidence and trust have been substantially enhanced through projects such as the reconnection of railroads and highways across the demilitarized zone (DMZ), the removal of landmines in the vicinity of the DMZ, the development of the Gaesong industrial complex, the installation of a hotline between military authorities in Seoul and in Pyongyang, and the exploration of opportunities for cooperation in fisheries in the Yellow Sea. We believe that by increasing mutual confidence, these measures will have a positive impact on efforts to resolve many pending security issues.

In contrast to the setbacks we have faced on nuclear issues, recent achievements in the area of small arms and light weapons have been quite encouraging. Though there is still much to be done, the adoption in 2001 of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, followed by the adoption of the draft International Instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and the entry into force last year of the firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime were substantive steps in the right direction. We hope that further measures to strengthen the Programme of Action, including confidence-building measures, will be discussed and adopted at the upcoming review conference for the Programme of Action.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is also incorporated in the Programme of Action, is a good example of the practical application of a confidence-building measure on a global scale. Since its inception in 1992, the Register has contributed to enhancing the level of transparency in military affairs. My delegation welcomes the steady increase in the number of Member States that are participating in the Register by submitting national reports. We call on those States that have not yet done so to consider participating.

We believe that positive consideration should be given to the Secretary-General's suggestion contained in his report to the Security Council in March to expand the Register to include international transfers of small arms and light weapons. Likewise, we would like to see wider participation with the United Nations System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures.

In today's world, ongoing reform has become a part of life. Throughout the United Nations it has become clear that achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. The Disarmament Commission should be no exception. My delegation believes that it is timely and appropriate for us to discuss measures to improve the Commission's working methods. We pledge to participate in such discussions with an open mind.

The challenges before us are substantial, but some progress is better than none. As we strive to overcome the current stalemate, Mr. Chairman, my delegation looks to your wise guidance, but in the end, it will be up to every Member State to find the will and strength to break the impasse in the Disarmament Commission and move forward towards a safer and more peaceful world.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Commission. Through you, I would also like to congratulate the Bureau and the Chairpersons of the Working Groups on their elections. I am confident that, under your able and skilled stewardship, the deliberations of the Commission will come to fruition and produce effective results.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Tanaka, the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to wish him all the best in his new and challenging assignment.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are meeting here at a time when the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery is in limbo. Not only have we not made any progress during the past several years, we have in fact regressed on many fronts. That is evidenced in some recent developments outside the existing disarmament and non-proliferation machinery, which have further weakened the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiation — has been remarkably unproductive for over a decade. The debacle of the 2005 NPT Review Conference was shocking, to say the least. And our failure to make any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document was surely acute underperformance. Those successive failures have certainly left deep dents in our confidence in the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours.

It is from that perspective that we attach great importance to this substantive session of the Commission. Our agreement on the Commission's agenda may be a small step, but it is surely a firm step in the right direction.

The NPT and the CTBT are the two key instruments for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Bangladesh believes that any erosion of the NPT regime is a danger to world peace. We also reject double standards and call for the universalization of the NPT and the CTBT. If possession of nuclear weapons appears to strengthen the sense of security, their acquisition will become attractive. If some have them, and appear to benefit from their possession, others will want them also. That is a simple, but incontrovertible, logic.

I am happy to be able to say that Bangladesh has an impeccable disarmament and non-proliferation record. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first South Asian nation in Annex 2 of the CTBT to have ratified that Treaty. We are also a party to the NPT and to other disarmament treaties. We have concluded safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including on additional protocols.

We believe that the greatest threat to humanity continues to stem from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. We have witnessed the devastation caused by the atomic bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But those bombs contained energy equivalent to some 12,500 tons of TNT. According to experts, the power of a nuclear bomb currently ranges from the equivalent of 1 to 20 megatons of TNT, and several thousands of them are deployed around the world.

Furthermore, we are continuing efforts to enhance precision. We must bear in mind that increasing precision — or the supposed reduction in collateral damage — also enhances the propensity for use, thereby lowering the nuclear threshold. That is a genie that once unleashed can never be contained. No war resulting from its use can be fightable or winnable.

We are also convinced that nuclear weapons have served no purpose for humankind. With the demise of the cold war, almost two decades ago, erstwhile foes have become partners, and even allies. The theory of nuclear deterrence that we used to call MAD — mutually assured destruction — was developed and put in practice in a different historical era. Such a theory should no longer be relevant in this era. Furthermore, we believe that nuclear weapons are inherently dangerous, hugely expensive and militarily inefficient.

We also reject doctrines that view nuclear weapons as legitimate means of war-fighting. The International Court of Justice has rightly concluded, in its advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, that

> "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law." (see *A/51/218, annex, para. 105 (2) E*)

The belief that nuclear arms can ensure the security of a country is not only baneful but also fallacious. We also acknowledge that in the event of a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. We must therefore strive for systematic and concerted nuclear disarmament, with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We are deeply disappointed at the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. However, we do not believe that that has in any way weakened our achievements at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. We also believe that the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed by consensus in 2000 continues to be the cornerstone of our disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

We are concerned at the slow pace of progress on the part of the nuclear-weapon States towards eliminating their nuclear arsenals, as well about the improvement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons, which run contrary to the assurances provided at the time of the conclusion of the CTBT. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take immediate steps towards irreversible and accelerated reduction and the eventual elimination of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

We urge the Conference on Disarmament to return to its substantive work immediately and to begin negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe. In that regard, we refer to the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice, in the same advisory opinion, that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*ibid, para. 105 (2) F*)

The Conference on Disarmament must also resume its negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty without any further delay.

Bangladesh reiterates that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is in contravention of negative security assurances. We continue to believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against such use or threat of use. Pending their total elimination, we reiterate our call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

Bangladesh deeply values the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We appreciate the efforts in the context of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we call for the establishment of more such zones in all regions of the world.

Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable right of all States parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the Treaty. The NPT thus obliges States parties to cooperate among themselves in the matter of exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge and information on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

It is disconcerting to note that undue restrictions on exports to developing non-nuclear-weapon countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes continue to persist through measures incompatible with the provisions of the Treaty. Those barriers must be removed.

We also underscore that the IAEA must, under its statutory obligations, continue to pursue the goals of technical cooperation in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. The IAEA must put in place necessary safeguards and verification regimes and monitor their compliance in conformity with the obligations of the States parties to the NPT.

Bangladesh remains convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the greatest guarantee against their proliferation. Bangladesh is concerned at alleged attempts by terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. That is a grave phenomenon that we need to address collectively and with prudence. But we believe that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is through the total elimination of such weapons.

Bangladesh underlines the importance of reducing alarmingly increasing military expenditures in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armament. Increased openness and transparency in the legitimate transfer of conventional arms, coupled with enhanced reliance on the peaceful settlement of disputes, could build the necessary environment of confidence. Such steps would reduce the risks of armed conflicts and the arms race, freeing up vital resources for the socio-economic development of the poor and vulnerable sectors of our populations.

The challenge before us today is to totally eliminate nuclear weapons before they eliminate us. That would be a litmus test for humanity; it would also determine our capacity to be led, by sound logic and respect for international law, to security for all — or, through fear and a quest for power, to oblivion.

Moreover, we must remember that the current deadlock in the disarmament machinery is the result of deliberate policy decisions. It is generally asserted, with a modicum of truth, that success in nuclear disarmament does not hinge on technical issues but is a matter of political will. We therefore need stronger political will and more innovative thinking to move forward on this score. If we fail to act now, it would be at great peril to ourselves and to posterity.

Mr. Chaudhry (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its substantive session this year. My delegation also extends felicitations to the other members of the Commission's Bureau on their election and to the Chairs of the two working groups. We assure them of our support and cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Tanaka. We wish him success as he assumes his new responsibilities.

The Disarmament Commission session has two substantive items on its agenda: "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". In addition to those two agenda items, the Commission will discuss measures for improving the effectiveness of the working methods of the Commission. We hope that the Commission will be able to overcome the differences surrounding the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and to agree on actions required at the international and regional levels with a view to reviving the prospects for effective nuclear and conventional disarmament and its meaningful contribution to international and regional peace and security.

With regard to the first substantive agenda item, the Commission should be able to recommend ways and means of addressing the motives that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Those motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

The new threat of terrorists acquiring WMDs must also be addressed. The threat of proliferation can be contained only if it is accompanied by a parallel effort to achieve WMD disarmament. Discrimination and the asymmetrical possession of weapons of mass destruction are not a recipe for non-proliferation or for regional or global stability. To deal effectively with this threat, collective and cooperative measures, not coercion and discrimination, are required. At the same time, new threats should not obscure the dangers posed by the existence and continuous improvement — that is, the vertical proliferation — of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and must be promoted and pursued simultaneously.

Initiatives that bypass the existing multilateral framework offer only temporary solutions in the area of counter-proliferation, non-proliferation and non-compliance. An unequal and restricted Security Council cannot supplant or circumvent multilateral negotiating processes. Unilateral restrictions and selective regimes will not promote security; they will exacerbate insecurity.

The elaboration of treaty regimes is no doubt an arduous exercise, but once treaties have been freely agreed, they have a better chance of commanding adherence and compliance. It is therefore important that the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004) should now be transferred to a more representative and legitimate body within the General Assembly.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, credible steps by nuclear-weapon States within a reasonable time frame are essential to revalidate the bargain on disarmament and non-proliferation and to restore a genuine balance between those two objectives. Cooperation in the peaceful use of energy must also continue to enjoy international support under globally agreed conditions. There is a need to reconcile the nuclear reality — that is, the existence of eight, not five, nuclear-weapon States — with the global non-proliferation regime. That needs to be achieved on a systemic and non-discriminatory basis that strengthens rather than weakens the objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Discriminatory approaches and double standards will not serve those objectives.

Although Pakistan is a nuclear-weapon State, it subscribes to the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are fulfilling the NPT's non-proliferation norms and objectives. Pakistan is prepared, on a voluntary and non-discriminatory basis, to continue to act in consonance with the obligations undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under articles I, II and III of the NPT. Efforts to secure the universality of the NPT are commendable, but they must take account of realties that are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Pakistan supports negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate and the "five ambassadors" proposal for a universal, non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. The report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) clearly identifies the key issues, which include the scope of the Treaty, the past and future production of fissile material and the management of such material. The agreed basis for negotiating the Treaty cannot be described as preconditions.

Unless nuclear disarmament is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States will continue to be entitled to assurances that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. The security assurances offered by most nuclear-weapon States are restrictive, partial and qualified, and they do not enhance the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Threats to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States in certain circumstances must be disavowed.

We share the view that existing international legal instruments are inadequate to prevent the weaponization of outer space. There is a need to consolidate and reinforce the regime and enhance its effectiveness even as we comply strictly with existing agreements. China and Russia, in that regard, have done important work. We therefore support the five ambassadors' proposal to commence work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in a Conference on Disarmament ad hoc committee.

We also share the global concern regarding unbridled ballistic missile proliferation. To avert it, we call for enhanced efforts to conclude a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and universally negotiated treaty, within the United Nations system, on missiles, covering all aspects.

While international attention is focused on the need to control weapons of mass destruction, the trade in, and military expenditures on, conventional weapons continue to increase. After an initial decline in outlays on conventional weapons in the immediate aftermath of the cold war, in recent years there has been a surge in expenditures and a build-up of conventional armaments and armed forces.

The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly characterized global military expenditures in 1978 as a colossal waste of resources and called for not only a reduction in such spending but also for the reinvestment of such resources into efforts to fight poverty and improve the human condition.

By that yardstick, cumulatively, global trends in military expenditures worldwide are both staggering and alarming. In 2004, total military spending rose to $1.035 trillion, at 2005 prices. This is in sharp contrast to the total budget of the United Nations, mandated to maintain international peace and security — less than 1.5 per cent of the world's military expenditures. The total value of arms transfer agreements in 2004 has been estimated at $37 billion, a significant increase over 2003. In 2004, the value of all arms transfer agreements with developing nations was nearly $21.8 billion — an increase over the $15.1 billion total in 2003.

The total value of international arms transfer agreements during the period 2001 to 2004 was $131.2 billion. During that period, developing countries accounted for 63.2 per cent of all international arms deliveries. Globalized arms production and sales continue to ignore the grave

humanitarian, political and strategic consequences of conventional weapons proliferation.

In view of these disturbing trends, it is imperative to pursue conventional arms control, at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, in order to promote regional and international peace and security. We believe that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest levels of armaments should be the prime objective of conventional arms control.

Conventional arms control needs to be pursued primarily in the regional and subregional contexts, since most threats to peace and security arise mainly in States located in the same region or subregion. In that regard, we can adopt and follow good practices. The value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a cornerstone of European security, cannot be underestimated. States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security.

The General Assembly has adopted a resolution entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels" which requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider formulating the principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control. The Assembly has also adopted a resolution entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context". That resolution emphasizes that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help strengthen international peace and security and be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. It also encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. We hope that the Commission will draw on those resolutions in preparing recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

We in South Asia are pursuing a strategic restraint regime which has three constituents: nuclear and missile restraint; conventional balance; and conflict resolution. Even as we pursue the composite dialogue and confidence-building measures to resolve outstanding issues and promote strategic stability and nuclear-risk reduction, we will continue to strive for a conventional balance at the lowest possible level of armaments, since an imbalance could threaten stability, both conventional and non-conventional. In the interest of peace and security in South Asia, there must be restraint both in the demand and the supply of conventional weapons.

This session is taking place against the backdrop of several challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime as well as to the multilateral deliberative and negotiating platforms. The failure to achieve agreement on disarmament and non-proliferation at the September summit last year highlighted those divergences. A decade-long impasse in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the two-year deadlock within the Commission underscore the fact that there are clear differences in perception, approach and modalities among member States in dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Those differences are dangerous for peace and stability, particularly in regions riven by conflicts and tensions. It is therefore essential to promote, through consultations and agreement among all United Nations Member States, a new security consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. It must be premised on one of the fundamental principles of the Charter — that security is the right of every State.

The following elements could constitute the basis for such a consensus: first, affirmation of the centrality of the Charter for the peaceful resolution of underlying disputes and acceptance of the principle of equal security for all States; second, adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter to advance disarmament and non-proliferation and to promote and preserve international and regional peace and security; third, initial steps towards disarmament, including those agreed at the international level, and the de-alerting of nuclear weapons; fourth, compliance by all States parties with their respective obligations with respect to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) disarmament and non-proliferation; fifth, normalization of the relationship of the three States that are not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with the NPT regime, as suggested by Mr. ElBaradei and others.

Sixth, a commitment by all States to implement agreed measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs and their means of delivery; seventh, reaffirmation of the fact that preventing the

proliferation of WMDs shall not hamper international cooperation for peaceful purposes, while the goal of peaceful uses should not be used as a cover for proliferation; eighth, progress towards conventional weapons control and non-proliferation, especially in regions of conflict, with a view to promoting the maintenance of security at the lowest possible level of armaments; ninth, the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; and, tenth, revitalization of the United Nations disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the General Assembly, to address international security, disarmament and proliferation challenges.

A new consensus would help address such threats as WMD proliferation to terrorists, the reported new doctrines on the use of nuclear weapons in waging war and the accompanying design and development of usable nuclear weapons, the development and accumulation of advanced conventional weapons, the development and deployment of an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system globally and regionally, the absence of an international agreement on missiles, and the militarization of outer space.

With regard to consideration of the issue of improving the Commission's working methods, we share the view of the Non-Aligned Movement that this issue has to be seen and discussed within the context of the overarching process of the revitalization of the General Assembly. A balanced and comprehensive approach is essential. At the same time, it should be noted that the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament — and, for that matter, in the overall multilateral disarmament machinery — is political, not procedural. Therefore, it cannot be broken by semantics or clever proposals for a programme of work. What is required is the political will to engage in substantive negotiations on all issues, not a quick fix addressing only some of them.

Pending the resolution of disagreements on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work and agenda, the Commission could consider, within its three-year cycle of work programme, the possibility of convening a special session to evolve and develop a new consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: I should like at the outset to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our full cooperation for the success of our work. I should like also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe, for his efforts in preparing for this session. I wish further to welcome the appointment of the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, and to wish him every success in his work.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The delegation of Algeria welcomes the consensus reached at the end of last year that enabled the Disarmament Commission to resume its role and to renew the substantive debate in the important area of disarmament. However, it is clear that we are approaching our work in a disquieting international context that is fraught with significant implications for international peace and security — a context in which the multilateral enterprise of disarmament shows worrisome signs of running out of steam owing to the emergence of a new generation of weapons of mass destruction and of threats linked to nuclear proliferation.

This Disarmament Commission session is taking place in the wake of a series of developments that have had a negative effect on the nuclear disarmament process, marked, in particular, by the failure of the work of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the ongoing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the paralysis of this very Commission in recent years.

However, those difficulties do nothing to weaken our firm belief that general and complete disarmament remains the only sound option for future generations, provided that the political will of States and a united front exist to relaunch a holistic debate on this issue.

From that standpoint, the Disarmament Commission, which has proved itself effective in the past, remains the most appropriate multilateral forum for cooperation and dialogue with the capacity to propose recommendations to consolidate past achievements and to participate in the efforts of the

international community with a view to relaunching the disarmament process and laying the foundation for a new era of peace and security.

It is in that constructive spirit aimed at establishing authentic collective security that my delegation intends to contribute to the success of the work of the Commission and work for consensus on the items on its agenda.

The item entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", which we will be discussing in Working Group I, will, we believe, help to reinforce disarmament and international security, for which we are all working. From our perspective, the goal of general and complete disarmament must regain its full meaning and relevance. Its achievement must be part of a process rooted firmly in scrupulous respect for the principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and in the priorities it set out, foremost among which is nuclear disarmament.

The achievement of nuclear disarmament must be predicated on a definitive break with the order based on the doctrine of military deterrence and supremacy. It must be actively undertaken through the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, with a view to setting out a programme of work that allows it to begin negotiations on drawing up binding legal instruments relating to nuclear disarmament, guarantees of the non-use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Along the same lines, the implementation of the unequivocal, historic commitment undertaken by the nuclear States at the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals, along with the universality of the NPT, are very relevant means of achieving nuclear disarmament.

It is useful in this respect to recall that the 13 practical steps for the implementation of article VI of the NPT, adopted at the sixth Review Conference, over which my country had the honour of presiding, constitute a genuine programme of action pointing the way to disarmament and to meeting the ardent desire of all of humankind to see the world forever rid of weapons of mass destruction and the consequent threat of annihilation.

Furthermore, scrupulous respect for and implementation of the commitments undertaken to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be accompanied by joint international efforts to promote technological cooperation and scientific exchanges with a view to guaranteeing for all States the possibility of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is important here to establish a balance between, on the one hand, the desire to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms and, on the other, the need for the transfer of nuclear technology for socio-economic development.

With regard to consideration of the second item, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", we hope that by the end of this cycle of the Disarmament Commission the outcome of our work will take account of the concerns of all delegations.

In this respect, we should emphasize that any steps aimed at confidence-building should be global in character and consist of strengthening peace and security, enhancing arms limitations and contributing to both conventional and nuclear disarmament. A selective approach pinpointing conventional weapons as being the only area on which confidence-building measures should focus would be a partial approach, and is not in our common interest.

Confidence-building measures, whose purpose is to create conditions for peaceful coexistence and to improve international relations founded on cooperation and solidarity, would be greatly strengthened by the reaffirmation of the universal principles enshrined in the Charter, namely, the right to legitimate self-defence, no recourse to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the sovereign equality of States and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Equally important, economic measures that have a direct effect on security and the establishment of an equitable international economic environment that does not create marginalization are also elements that contribute to strengthening confidence-building measures.

At a time when the Conference on Disarmament, which has just concluded the work of the first part of its session, is faced with deadlock — a situation about which we are greatly concerned — I would like to express the hope that our Commission will continue to serve as a forum for productive and fruitful dialogue. Today, more than ever, the virtues of negotiation and cooperation must be pursued with a view to achieving disarmament and thus promoting an era of collective peace and security.

Finally, I would like to express once again my best wishes for the success of the work of the Commission.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on having been elected to lead the Disarmament Commission during its 2006 substantive session, and to express our wish for a successful session through coordination among the Bureau, member States and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, to whom we wish success.

The success of our deliberations on nuclear disarmament and on confidence-building measures during the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is all the more important in view of the declining priority given in 2005 to nuclear disarmament commitments, on the pretext of changing international security priorities. This led to the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the failure of the 2005 Millennium review summit to reach agreement in its outcome document on measures for nuclear disarmament and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime with a view to achieving the goal of preventing the further development of nuclear weapons and ultimately their total elimination.

Accordingly, it is incumbent upon this session of the Disarmament Commission to work to overcome the recent failures of international nuclear disarmament efforts, through full compliance by nuclear-weapon States with the unequivocal undertaking, agreed to by consensus at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, which remains the highest priority of international disarmament efforts, in accordance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

Regional nuclear disarmament efforts represent a major contribution complementing international nuclear disarmament efforts to obtain the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions is among the most important of those regional efforts and contributes to the achievement of our nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

In this regard, and in spite of the success achieved through the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, Egypt and the other Arab States have for the past 25 years continued to strive, without progress, to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to prevent nuclear proliferation in the region. While the Arab States have committed themselves to these goals through adherence to the NPT, Israel's non-adherence to the treaty to date constitutes a genuine threat to regional security and a challenge to the non-proliferation regime, a state of affairs which continues to undermine the credibility of the NPT.

In order to address this threat to the regime, States parties, particularly nuclear-weapon States, must give concrete form to their commitment as expressed in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. That resolution forms an integral part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty. It calls upon Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards and calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. These steps represent a prerequisite for the continued viability and validity of the non-proliferation regime in the region, which can be achieved only through the universality of the NPT and full compliance by all States parties with all of its provisions, on a non-selective basis.

Thus, the delegation of Egypt reaffirms its intention to pursue these efforts during the current session of the Disarmament Commission, in the light of the Commission's 1999 recommendations regarding nuclear-weapon-free zones and following our efforts in the General Assembly. We shall continue to advocate a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The non-proliferation regime today faces serious challenges, prime among them non-compliance with nuclear disarmament commitments under article VI of the NPT and the 13 practical steps agreed upon by consensus in 2000. Other challenges emanate from the emergence of strategic doctrines that promote the continued possession and development of nuclear weapons and the threat of their use against non-nuclear-weapon States, based on security considerations.

Thus, the delegation of Egypt strongly supports the call by the Non-Aligned Movement as expressed by the representative of Indonesia, for convening an international conference at the earliest possible date, with the objective of reaching agreement on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, for prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use, and for effecting their destruction. Convening such an international conference would give concrete form to the resolve of our Heads of State and Government expressed in the Millennium Declaration. It should aim at achieving the universality of the NPT and compliance by all States parties with their commitments, in accordance with the three pillars, as well as with the decisions and the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the final document of the 2000 Review Conference. The conference should also strive to fulfil the unequivocal undertaking in article VI of the NPT to eliminate nuclear arsenals as a stepping stone to nuclear disarmament. The conference should obtain commitments from States to eliminate security and defence doctrines based on the possession of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence, the development of military alliances and the sharing of nuclear technology. It should obtain commitments by nuclear-weapon States to withdraw and renounce deployment of their nuclear weapons outside their national territories and on non-first-use of nuclear weapons, including a legally binding international instrument jointly undertaking non-first-use and prohibiting the development and improvement of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Finally, the conference should strive to achieve a legally binding multilateral instrument on negative security assurances within the framework of the NPT, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the second substantive agenda item, on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, such measures cannot be a substitute for disarmament measures. Rather, they are complementary measures conducive to strengthening disarmament efforts. Such measures must be impartial, objective, transparent and comprehensive so that they can be agreed upon voluntarily by the States concerned, accomplishing thereby their intended confidence-building purposes.

The comprehensive application of confidence-building measures on the basis of equality can contribute to more effective security arrangements based on cooperation, transparency and the rejection of the use or threat of use of force.

Experience throughout the years has proved that confidence-building measures alone are insufficient without a strategic and political commitment to the principle of equal security for all and to peaceful co-existence based on cooperation instead of on military and other forms of advantages.

Bearing in mind the principle of equal security for all — and taking into account legitimate security concerns of all States concerned — it has to be noted that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms cannot serve its purpose as a confidence-building measure regionally and internationally so long as its scope is not expanded to include military holdings, procurement through national production and weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, as per General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, on the establishment of the Register. Nor will it serve as a confidence-building measure so long as it does not take into account considerations of regional military balances, which differ from one region to another.

In conclusion, the delegation of Egypt would like to express its support for your efforts, Mr. Chairman, to arrive at effective recommendations regarding nuclear disarmament and at confidence-building measures in a balanced manner that can lead to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the lofty post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections and to wish them every success in their work. You can rely,

Mr. Chairman, on the support and cooperation of the Russian delegation.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, who for the first time is participating in the work of the Disarmament Commission as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Our delegation is pleased by the fact that this year the Commission will conduct its substantial session in two working groups and that it will also discuss measures to improve the Commission's methods of work.

Russia has consistently upheld the central role of the United Nations in collective efforts to maintain international peace and security, devise a global strategy against new challenges and threats and prevent a nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, we support strengthening the Organization's multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Disarmament Commission.

We are faced with the paramount objectives of increasing the efficiency of the Organization and promoting the principle of multilateralism to ensure international security in strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. As the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, stressed in his address to the General Assembly on 15 September 2005,

> "there is a need to adjust the Organization to new historic realities. But this process should be constructive. It should take into account both the lessons learned and the positive experience gained by the United Nations. And this process must unite, not separate." (*A/60/PV.5, p. 4*)

Those words are fully relevant to the work of the Disarmament Commission. We hope that the three-year cycle for the discussion of agenda items that begins this year will lead us to agreed recommendations.

Various views have been voiced recently about the critical state of the multilateral non-proliferation regime, arms control and disarmament. We agree that many of our expectations in this field remain unfulfilled. We regret in particular the failure to agree on a disarmament section in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. We all expected much more from the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nevertheless, we believe that the overall balance of United Nations activities remains positive. We have managed to avoid a recurrence of the threat of a global nuclear conflict. We have prevented or resolved dozens of armed conflicts. And we have prevented weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists.

We believe that strengthening the regimes on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is now coming to the forefront of multilateral efforts. The Russian Federation was one of the sponsors of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which aims at combating black markets for weapons of mass destruction. We call upon all States to implement its provisions rigorously. We also expect that the Council will extend the mandate of the resolution this month.

The Russian Federation also initiated, and was the first to sign, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The time has come to bring it into force and to have it fully implemented everywhere.

The world has recently encountered complicated issues in safeguarding the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that preserving the integrity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and promoting its universalization are crucial tasks in the cause of ensuring international peace and security. The main role in that regard belongs to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), whose task, on the one hand, is to guarantee the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, and on the other, to guarantee the legitimate interests of States in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

We call for further efforts to find a solution to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme within the framework of the IAEA, in a calm and depoliticized atmosphere. We believe that the Agency is capable of clarifying the remaining issues.

Russia considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be one of the key elements in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. We are thinking primarily of those States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. It is also important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear

explosions should continue to be observed until that time.

We reaffirm our position that the next multilateral measure in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament should be the development of a fissile material cut-off treaty concerning the production of such material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We support reactivating the Ad Hoc Committee on a cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and with a mandate to negotiate.

Russia expresses its wholehearted support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions as one of the key elements in reducing the geographical area of nuclear weapons deployment. Russian nuclear weapons are located only within the borders of our national territory. In accordance with our national and international obligations, we have provided security assurances to NPT States parties participating in nuclear-weapon-free zones. We do not object to re-establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate under an agenda item entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

We are committed to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Russia fully complies with its commitments under article VI of the NPT, as well as under its treaties with the United States and unilateral initiatives on nuclear disarmament. Since 1991 the aggregate number of stockpiled nuclear weapons has been reduced by one fifth, and non-strategic nuclear weapons by one fourth. Those reductions — and this is indeed a labour-intensive, technically complex and very costly undertaking — are well underway and are running smoothly and uninterruptedly.

The Russian Federation is committed to the principle of the irreversibility of reductions in nuclear weapons. As President Putin has stated, we are prepared to take new constructive steps in that area.

With regard to the process of strengthening confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Russia made every effort to promote the swift entry into force of the renewed Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), including the ratification, in summer 2004, of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty. Now it is our partners' turn. We have no intention of continuing to pretend that the CFE Treaty agreed in 1990 — when there was a confrontation between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO — is functioning normally and that we are satisfied with it. NATO countries must fulfil their obligations assumed at Istanbul in 1999 to undertake efforts to complete the national ratification procedures so that the Agreement on Adaptation can be implemented as soon as possible. It is clear that, if this situation does not change, the participants in the third CFE Treaty Review Conference, to be held in May this year, will have to decide in principle on the future of this cornerstone of European security.

Russia supports the leadership of the United Nations in resolving the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We are prepared to work out an international arms trade agreement under the aegis of the United Nations. Within the framework of the Small Arms Review Conference to be held this summer, we will provide information about specific actions that we have undertaken to implement the Programme.

Russia supports the functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We consider that instrument to be an important confidence-building measure, and we submit data for it on a regular basis. We support the inclusion in the Register of a very sensitive kind of weapon — man-portable air defence systems — as a subcategory.

At the current session of the Disarmament Commission, we are prepared to consider issues related to the improvement of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We wish to point out, as a matter of principle, that this process should not infringe upon the legitimate interests of any member of the international community and that it should not become a purely bureaucratic process conducted by a small group of officials.

We do not believe that it is necessary to dismantle the existing multilateral disarmament triad of the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. The key issue here is to optimize and enhance the practical results of their

activities. At the same time, we believe that the Disarmament Commission should serve as an integrator of concrete ideas and concepts aimed at identifying problems that should be addressed through international agreements.

Ms. Notutela (South Africa): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its 2006 substantive session. My delegation would also like to welcome Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka as the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

South Africa is gravely concerned at the general lack of meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament and the apparent paralysis in one of the main parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery: the Conference on Disarmament. The failure of the Seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament are an indictment that we have not risen to the challenge posed by nuclear weapons.

These impediments to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are manifestations of a serious lack of political will to implement previously agreed nuclear disarmament commitments and undertakings. They also depict our lack of courage to negotiate on certain core issues that would advance nuclear disarmament. South Africa believes that this state of affairs leaves us in a precarious situation of questionable prospects for nuclear disarmament. Rather than dispelling that view, the inability of the recent General Assembly High-level Plenary Meeting to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear non-proliferation entrenched it.

Despite that disappointing situation, South Africa continues to believe that progress on both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is required in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Although that is not a new concept, South Africa strongly cautions against the tendency to place primary emphasis on one or the other of those aspects. If that tendency continues unabated, the pivotal role of the NPT as the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation would be undermined.

Given these difficult times — which have been compounded by the Disarmament Commission's failure for the past two years to agree on an agenda — it is imperative that the Commission strive at its present session to continue as a deliberative body on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. However, every effort should be made to retain its relevance through focused debates on the agenda items. South Africa is hopeful that our deliberations will identify recommendations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and finding achievable means to build confidence among States in the field of conventional weapons.

Nuclear disarmament is considered by all States to be one of the most important of the disarmament issues facing the international community. Moreover, nuclear disarmament is a concern of the entire international community. A source of concern for South Africa is the continuing refusal to recognize that that is indeed the case. The long and often frustrating negotiations to formulate an agenda item under the nuclear disarmament cluster are indicative of the lack of commitment to achieve progress in that field.

It is my delegation's firm belief that our deliberations at this session of the Disarmament Commission should build upon, but in no way diminish, the undertakings given and the agreements reached at the NPT Review Conferences. In that connection, South Africa strongly believes that all aspects of the NPT should be strictly implemented and enforced. Each article of the NPT remains binding on all States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and it is imperative that all States parties be held fully accountable as regards strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. The Commission's deliberations on recommendations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should support the processes in the context of the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT review mechanisms. The Commission should therefore consider further tangible ways and means to positively address the core elements required to facilitate action and results in moving our disarmament agenda forward.

Although nuclear weapons continue to constitute a serious threat to the survival of mankind, the build-up of conventional weapons — in particular small arms and light weapons — beyond a level that can be considered legitimate for the purposes of self-defence creates an unstable environment, in particular in areas where regional instability leads to regional conflicts. The rebuilding and prosperity of society gained

through various peace and democratization initiatives are curtailed by the accompanying proliferation of these weapons.

The excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons has a negative impact on confidence among States, especially neighbouring States. The critical factor for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is the need for transparency. Transparency is a key to the early detection of destabilizing accumulations of weapons. The Disarmament Commission's deliberations on this topic should, however, supplement and draw upon work already done in its previous sessions and by the Conference on Disarmament and United Nations study groups, as well as the experiences of States in that regard.

We could also draw upon some of the pertinent regional experiences and outcomes of workshops and seminars held in the context of strengthening transparency measures in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Another measure that will assist Member States in the field of transparency is the full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. As emphasized during the course of the negotiations on that instrument, South Africa believes that the United Nations should play an important role in the smooth operation of the instrument, including by facilitating cooperation and assistance in the field of marking and record-keeping. The basic premise behind the successful operation of the instrument is the concept of cooperation between and among States so as to trace and shut down illicit arms trading individuals and networks. As such, the sovereign right of States to trade in small arms and light weapons among one another should not be viewed as being under threat, but the instrument should be seen as contributing to our collective resolve to eradicate the illicit small arms and light weapons trade. Its value as a truly multilateral instrument will be measured against our willingness to share among ourselves the information that is required for its effectiveness.

Another practical measure to promote confidence among States in the field of conventional weapons that South Africa has actively pursued and implemented is the destruction of surplus and obsolete weapons no longer in use by Government forces. The destruction of surplus, confiscated or collected weapons, together with an appropriate reporting system on that process, will most certainly promote confidence among States in support of regional stability. It would significantly limit the illicit trade in such weapons as they may become targets of theft and diversion into the illicit trade.

With regard to the consideration of the item on improving the working methods of the Commission, my delegation supports idea that the discussion can continue based on the Chairman's working paper, as contained in the 2003 report of the Disarmament Commission. South Africa also believes that any efforts to improve the working methods of the Commission should also take into account the larger United Nations reform processes.

Finally, it is time that we find innovative ways of dealing with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as the prevalent paralysis in the United Nations disarmament machinery, in order to complement the achievements made on small arms and light weapons and anti-personnel mines. South Africa remains committed to working in the Commission and in all other disarmament and non-proliferation forums so as to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to limit the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum required for self-defence. My delegation will express specific views and positions on the two agenda items under consideration at this session during the deliberations of the two working groups.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): Mr. Chairman, please allow me to convey my congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission and to express confidence that, under your able stewardship, substantive progress will be made in addressing important issues on the agenda of the Commission.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka on his appointment to the high office of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and to express my appreciation for his introductory remarks made at the opening meeting here.

We all know that today the global security system is facing a serious crisis. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to set up a balanced and comprehensive mechanism that would facilitate the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Even more disturbing is the lack of clear recommendations on non-proliferation and disarmament in the outcome document of the summit.

Threats and challenges, particularly the proliferation of nuclear arms and the rise of international terrorism, have become a matter of grave concern for the international community. The danger of the acquisition of nuclear weapons or their components by terrorists has grown tremendously and has become an imminent threat. The adoption of, and general support for, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime and at preventing non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, is a strong signal in favour of an effective multilateral approach in this sphere.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament are mutually complementary processes. Kazakhstan continues to believe that it is essential to ensure a fair balance between the mutual obligations of both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States in order to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan has always pursued a principled policy of demilitarization and nuclear disarmament. We call for the universalization of international instruments in that area, including those elaborated by the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Last year we marked the tenth anniversary of the removal from the territory of Kazakhstan of all nuclear devices left over from the former Soviet Union. Our country has set a commendable example by voluntarily eliminating its nuclear arsenal, acceding to the NPT as a non-nuclear State, and shutting down the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground. Kazakhstan will continue to call upon all nuclear-weapon States to take further considerable steps on their way to nuclear disarmament.

Kazakhstan reaffirms its continued and strong commitment to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of global efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Kazakhstan also reaffirms its principled position regarding a total ban on all nuclear testing. We believe that it is necessary to speed up the ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Kazakhstan recognizes the special role of the International Atomic Energy Agency. All of the country's nuclear activity is being carried out in accordance with its standards and under its control. In 2002, Kazakhstan became a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which contributes significantly to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We are convinced that the establishment of new, internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is compatible with the goal of ensuring the integrity and sustainability of the international non-proliferation regime and would contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in different regions, and hence throughout the world. Kazakhstan is actively involved in the negotiations on a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, which would become an important contribution by Central Asian States to the declared objectives.

Kazakhstan fully supports the decision of the Disarmament Commission to include in its agenda an item on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons and believes that the destabilizing accumulation and proliferation of weapons continues to be a key factor affecting security and stability in the world. Criminal and terrorist groups and radical religious movements are actively engaged in illicit arms trafficking. Confidence-building measures constitute a very important and effective element in strengthening regional and global security. We should elaborate a broad spectrum of practical components that are integral parts of confidence-building measures, including establishing direct and open communications, arms control, verification, monitoring programmes and so on.

Our country is actively working on these issues within the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which we view as an important and useful forum for the exchange of views on security problems in the Asian region. It is encouraging to note that the CICA

member States have already made most of the practical efforts required to institutionalize the Conference. Important documents, including the Declaration on Principles, the catalogue of CICA confidence-building measures and the CICA rules of procedure, have already been adopted. The next steps within CICA will involve further joint efforts to implement confidence-building measures mentioned in the catalogue of CICA confidence-building measures, as well to adopt a common approach to new threats and challenges to security in Asia.

The second CICA summit is to take place in Almaty this summer. Plans for the summit include the adoption of the final political document and the signing of the CICA secretariat statute. On the eve of the summit, the CICA secretariat will be inaugurated.

My delegation also supports the consideration of measures to improve the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Commission. An agreed recommendation in that area could help us to ensure the success of future sessions.

Let me express once again our hope that during its current session the Commission will be able to formulate meaningful recommendations for the General Assembly on the whole range of issues under consideration. My delegation stands ready to work together with our colleagues to achieve our common goals.

The Chairman: Before adjourning the meeting, I shall say a few words about our future work. As representatives are aware, the Commission has not yet been able to elect a chairperson for Working Group I. I am continuing, with the assistance of Bureau members, to actively consult all regional groups on the candidature for that post. Given the absence of a chairperson for Working Group I, we in the Bureau have decided to offer the Commission the following programme of work, which reflects a few necessary changes, for the remainder of the week.

The last plenary meeting devoted to the general exchange of views will be held this afternoon. There are five or six further speakers on the list, so the meeting should end at about 4.30 p.m. There will be no meeting tomorrow morning, Wednesday 12 April. The first meeting of Working Group II will be held tomorrow afternoon in this Conference Room from 3 to 6 p.m.

On Thursday, 13 April, the Commission will meet in plenary meeting from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to discuss measures to improve the working methods of the Disarmament Commission. From 3 to 6 p.m., Working Group II will meet for the second time. That will take us to the end of this week's work, because Friday is not a working day. The Commission will resume its work on Monday of next week. We in the Bureau intend to continue our consultations, and hopefully by then we will have a chairperson for Working Group I.

I would like to say a few words about documentation to be submitted for consideration, particularly that relating to the issue of measures to improve working methods, which we will start to discuss on Thursday. Since I understand that several delegations intend to submit documents on that subject, I would urge them to do so as soon as possible. In determining what kind of papers they want to submit, they should keep in mind that working papers are usually issued in all languages and that the Secretariat will require 48 hours to translate them. On the other hand, what we call conference room papers are not translated and are issued in the language of submission only. I once again draw the attention of members to the time factor. Representatives should bear that in mind in deciding whether they want to submit working papers or conference room papers.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.272

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

272nd meeting

Tuesday, 11 April 2006, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Dhital (Nepal): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I would like to extend our hearty congratulations to you on your well-deserved election and to the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I am confident that you will steer the Commission's work to a successful conclusion.

I take this opportunity to welcome the newly appointed Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, and would like to thank him for his comprehensive opening remarks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are concerned over the slow progress in nuclear disarmament. However, we are pleased to note that this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place after agreement was reached on its agenda, including among other items, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". We believe that the deliberations of member States will generate momentum and intensify efforts towards the adoption of multilateral measures for disarmament, verification of compliance and the establishment of new norms and standards.

Nepal values multilateral negotiations in disarmament and non-proliferation that ensure transparency and accountability. It is a party to various multilateral treaties and agreements, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My delegation encourages the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and supports the necessary measures for preventing non-State actors from acquiring more lethal small arms and light weapons. The increased use of such weapons by non-State actors has threatened peace, security and the economic and social stability of nations, particularly small ones.

The delegation of Nepal firmly believes that until and unless the international community creates an environment in which nuclear weapons can be eliminated once and for all, there will always be an incentive to produce nuclear weapons in order to gain entry into the club of powerful nuclear States. That is why we should gear our efforts towards eliminating nuclear weapons from the world.

We believe that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms could play a significant role in creating an environment conducive to achieving the broader objective of international cooperation in arms control and disarmament. Such measures should take into consideration the particular political and military conditions prevailing in each respective region.

My delegation commends the efforts of the United Nations towards reducing and eventually

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eliminating nuclear weapons, destroying chemical weapons and enhancing the prohibition of biological weapons. Nepal reiterates its commitment to achieving the goal of general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. We call for a truly global effort towards achieving the noble goal of general disarmament and non-proliferation in order to ensure peace, justice and security for all mankind.

Regional mechanisms could contribute to strengthening confidence-building measures and implementing various multilateral instruments on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In that respect, I would like to reiterate the commitment of His Majesty's Government of Nepal to relocate the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to Kathmandu within six months of the signing of the host country agreement with the Secretariat and following the completion of necessary formalities. My delegation eagerly awaits a draft agreement from the Secretariat.

In conclusion, disarmament, regulation of armaments and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction would be in the interest of all mankind. We must undertake the necessary efforts to achieve general disarmament and non-proliferation under the auspices of the United Nations. Let us rededicate our efforts to strengthening international peace and security.

Mrs. Taylor Roberts (Jamaica): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to guide the deliberations of the Commission. You can be assured of the cooperation of the delegation of Jamaica in the discharge of your duties.

We welcome Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and wish him well in his new assignment. We also thank Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, immediate past Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, for his contribution to reviving the work of the Commission.

Jamaica fully supports the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, but wishes to make the following additional remarks from a national perspective.

The challenges we have faced, particularly in recent times, in connection with achieving the objectives of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, the increased anxiety about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility that those weapons could end up in the hands of terrorists and other persons make the deliberations of this Commission of keen importance and relevance to the disarmament agenda. The existing general international unease and insecurity is further reinforced by a prevailing sense that the principles of multilateralism are under threat, coupled with the evident retreat from previously agreed international commitments and obligations. Rather than a seeking to adhere to international obligations to curtail the spread of nuclear weapons, there are instead new justifications and rationales for the maintenance and development of nuclear weapons. That is disturbing.

As a State dependent upon the effective role of the multilateral system in securing a stable and peaceful environment through the removal of threats to international peace and the full implementation of multilateral agreements and commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation, we welcome the opportunity provided by the resumption of the substantive work of the Commission to engage in meaningful deliberation on the way forward and in establishing, promoting and elaborating global norms on disarmament through discussions on the two main agenda items, namely, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons".

Recent setbacks may prompt us to agree that there is a need to be forward-looking and open to innovative ideas in effecting change in the disarmament agenda. Such a quest, however, should not be at the expense of previously agreed instruments and disarmament obligations. Our approach needs to be based on a firm commitment to multilateralism underpinned by strong political will. In this case, rather than ambition being tempered by realism, there is a need to be cognizant of the grim reality facing all of us with the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

It is critical that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil their obligations under multilateral instruments, in particular under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There should

also adherence to previously agreed commitments, including the 13 practical steps, and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Unless commitments are fully respected and honoured, there will be no progress in reaching non-proliferation goals.

It is also clear that the strengthening of confidence in the area of international security will be dependent upon the absence of discriminatory or selective application of the norms and regulations governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The careful balance of rights and obligations enshrined in the NPT also needs to be respected and adhered to, including the rights of NPT States parties under article IV.

Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons are of interest to Jamaica, particularly due to the undisputed role of those weapons in creating the conditions for, and in worsening, conflicts and instability, including the consequent effect on international peace and security. The relative ease of access to, and the portability of, conventional weapons have posed security dilemmas for many States and have had to be juxtaposed against the relative right of States to defend themselves. Unfortunately, such considerations have come at the expense of human life and have led to untold suffering. That underscores the importance of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons as an integral component in furthering disarmament and in the prevention of war.

The increased security that is obtained through transparency, openness and accountability in military matters does much to enhance international stability and to reduce unwanted military tensions. We can support the proposal that we should use the Chairman's consolidated working paper as contained in the 2003 report of the Disarmament Commission (A/58/42) as a basis for further deliberation on these matters while taking into account those new developments, including other multilateral and regional initiatives, which will add value to our work.

Allow me to state in conclusion that Jamaica remains committed to the aims and objectives of the Commission as the universal, specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations mandated to undertake detailed examination of specific disarmament issues for consideration by the General Assembly. We hope that this year's substantive session will allow for constructive engagement on the issues, build on consensus and begin the process of developing guidelines and formulating concrete recommendations on the two main agenda items that will be the focus of our attention for the next three years. We are open to discussion on measures to improve the effectiveness of our methods of work, and consider that such discussions should not be merely procedural in nature but involve other ideas, including an assessment of the processes of decision-making. In any event, the overall objective of that exercise should be the strengthening of the work of the Commission so as to further the goal of disarmament.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the current session of the Disarmament Commission, an important body that is dear to the broad membership of the Organization. I am sure that, under your skilful stewardship, we will be able to have a smooth and successful session.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, the newly appointed Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to wish him success. My delegation will not hesitate to continue its cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs during Mr. Tanaka's tenure.

I should like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

After two years of deadlock over the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, we are glad that this year the Commission has a substantive agenda, including an item on nuclear disarmament, to be considered for three years. That provides us with a very good opportunity to express our views on the noble goal of nuclear disarmament, whose achievement the international community has awaited for more than three decades. It also offers us a chance to reflect on the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and to work on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects.

The continued existence in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States of thousands of nuclear warheads, which could destroy the entire globe many times over, and the increasing resort to threats of their

possible use are the major sources of concern with regard to global peace and security. The international community has the right to be assured that the nightmare visited upon the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never happen again.

Regrettably, the limited efforts of the major nuclear-weapon States to reduce their arsenals since the cold war have faced serious setbacks, particularly in recent years. Nuclear weapons continue to be deployed in non-nuclear-weapon countries as a part of the coalition of a certain group of States, a fact that exacerbates an already tense situation. Furthermore, concerns remain over research on and the development of new non-strategic, low-yield, easy-to-use nuclear weapons, coupled with the daily threat of their probable use against non-nuclear-weapon States, even in conventional combat.

Unfortunately, a serious attempt has been made to undermine the obligations agreed upon by consensus at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Non-nuclear weapon States, despite the difficulties that the non-proliferation regime had historically faced, generally determined that the NPT had been successful in containing the number of nuclear-weapon States and therefore, in 1995, agreed on a package of decisions aimed at allowing an indefinite extension of the NPT.

The consensual final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirmed those obligations and set out a plan of action in the form of 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement nuclear disarmament. As a follow-up to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, States parties to the Treaty decided to call upon Israel by name to accede to the NPT and to place all its clandestine nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with a view to realizing the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the 2000 NPT Conference, while reaffirming that the IAEA has to be the sole competent authority responsible for ensuring the peaceful application of nuclear energy, reconfirmed the undertakings by all parties to the Treaty to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy among States parties.

Since the 2000 NPT Review Conference, however, a trend of denials has compounded the previous rejection of the inalienable right of States parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Certain nuclear-weapon States first rejected the unequivocal undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals with a view to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and later even claimed that obligations under article VI do not exist at all. As a result of that policy, the 2005 NPT Review Conference ended without any substantive outcome. Soon after that, the United Nations world summit failed to include a section on disarmament in its outcome document (resolution 60/1) owing to the rejection of any reference to nuclear disarmament. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/72, which was submitted by my country, the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed its grave concern over the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and urged the States parties to the NPT to follow up on the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty agreed to at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

The adoption of the agenda items for the 2006 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, including one on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, has created a good opportunity to revive the nuclear disarmament process. The Disarmament Commission, as a specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, should have an in-depth discussion on the most important and urgent issue in the field of disarmament, namely, nuclear disarmament. In our view, the Commission can make concrete recommendations, if the political will exists, for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

In considering the nuclear disarmament issue, priority should be given to security assurances. In recent decades, non-nuclear-weapon States have been under threat by a high risk of the possible use of nuclear weapons. The lack of progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, coupled with the recently stated positions regarding the possible use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, has created a fragile international environment in which the national security of non-nuclear-weapon States is in

deep jeopardy. All promises given by nuclear-weapon States concerning their readiness to negotiate on a legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat of use or the use of nuclear weapons have turned out to be empty undertakings, thus contributing to mistrust among members of the international community.

We are of the firm belief that at this stage, together with our efforts to explore ways and means to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we should make simultaneous efforts to conclude a legally binding instrument against the use of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Commission is the appropriate forum in which to take up this issue and make specific recommendations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. Iran, as the initiator of the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, fully supports genuine efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Iran was among the first countries that ratified the NPT and concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA, thereby putting its facilities under the Agency's supervision. Iran's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the Biological Weapons Convention and our signing of the Comprehensive-Test-Ban Treaty are indicative of our resolve to adhere to the objective of non-proliferation.

We are of the view that the best way of ensuring the non-proliferation of WMDs is the full and non-selective implementation of those treaties and the transparency measures provided by those instruments, as well as the promotion of their universality. A double-standard approach rewarding non-parties and setting arbitrary thresholds would only undermine the credibility of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

In our view, efforts directed towards non-proliferation should be made in parallel with simultaneous efforts aimed at disarmament. The strengthening of these two concepts together would serve us well in securing a world that is free from weapons of mass destruction. Attaining the universality of non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, in particular the NPT, is essential in order for the international community to be safe and free.

Furthermore, the integrity and durability of an international regime such as the NPT is solely dependent on the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions. As a member State of the Non-Aligned Movement, we share the view that

> "the NPT is a key instrument in efforts to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and an essential foundation for nuclear disarmament." *(See A/CN.10/PV.269)*

Non-nuclear-weapon States renounced the nuclear option and pledged to fulfil their commitments, provided that they would be able to exercise their inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination or arbitrary thresholds.

Nuclear-weapon States are also bound by certain obligations under different provisions of the Treaty, including article IV, on facilitating, not restricting, the peaceful application of nuclear technology; article VI on nuclear disarmament; article III, paragraph 2, on refraining from the transfer of sensitive technology and materials to non-parties to the Treaty; and article I, on the non-transfer to any recipient whatsoever of nuclear weapons or control over such weapons.

The importance of these obligations requires the Commission to reflect them in all its recommendations.

I wish to emphasize that our commitment to the NPT is unqualified. Iran renounced nuclear weapons not only because of its contractual obligations under the NPT, but also due to its historical background and religious edicts. As a State party to the NPT, Iran insists on its inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology and will not accept any arbitrary threshold, as it has gone out of its way to address any genuine concern about the exclusively peaceful nature of its programme.

I cannot conclude this statement, Mr. Chairman, without assuring you of our continued full commitment to the provisions of the NPT and cooperation with the IAEA. We are also willing and prepared to engage in serious negotiations with interested parties to find an acceptable solution to the current situation.

Miss Majali (Jordan): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the chairmen of the Working Groups. I wish also to assure you, and them, of my delegation's

full support and cooperation. My delegation is confident that, using your experience and skill, you will spare no effort in trying to bring about a successful outcome of this meeting.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Tanaka, the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to wish him success in his new assignment and endeavours while assuring him of our full support and cooperation. That said, my delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf on the Non-Aligned Movement, to which it fully subscribes.

The importance of this 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission should not be minimized, since we are meeting in the wake of not only the numerous setbacks we have recently faced in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation — namely, the failure of the last Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the failure of the 2005 world summit to make any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation in its outcome document, and the now nearly 10-year deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament — but also the difficulties that the Commission itself has faced in the past few years, whether with regard to its inability to reach consensus on specific guidelines or proposals in its previous sessions or to its failure to agree on substantive agenda items for three consecutive years.

My delegation is therefore pleased that the Disarmament Commission has been able to resume its work. It also hopes that the Commission, as it deliberates on the two agenda items before it, will be able to reach consensus on substantive recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

As for the discussions we will be having on improving the Commission's methods of work, my delegation, while it is ready to engage constructively in the deliberations that will be taking place, remains of the view that efforts to improve the Commission's methods of work should be seen as an integral part of the revitalization of the General Assembly as a whole. Moreover, since the Disarmament Commission, as a specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, has succeeded in previous years in allowing for deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly at numerous sessions, most recently in 1999, and has greatly contributed towards the emergence of global disarmament norms, my delegation hopes that discussions in this regard will lead to a further reaffirmation of, and support for, its purposes and principles, thus allowing it once again to resume its efforts to fulfil its important mandate.

In working to address the first substantive agenda item, entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" — an issue of the highest importance given the fact that progress towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security — my delegation believes that the following important issues, among others, should be kept in mind as we work on drafting our recommendations.

First, the vision and the principles contained in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly remain relevant. Within that framework, Member States should both fulfil their obligations in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and continue their multilateral efforts towards achieving nuclear disarmament under effective international control and strengthening the international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

Secondly, the NPT, which rests on three pillars, remains the key instrument in our efforts to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In that regard, balanced and non-selective implementation of the NPT and the strict implementation of all its provisions are what are needed to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, in that context, there is a need for the full implementation of, and a firm commitment by all States parties to, the package agreed to at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which comprises the three decisions and the resolution on the Middle East, as well as the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in particular with regard to the 13 practical steps for the systematic and

progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty.

Thirdly, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. However, the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament remains a matter of concern, as is the need for nuclear-weapon States to implement their unequivocal undertaking to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

Fourthly, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which represents a major achievement of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, has yet to enter into force. In this respect, the negative developments with regard to the non-ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remain a matter of concern. It is hoped that States that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, especially those mentioned in annex II of the Treaty, will do so as soon as possible so that it can finally enter into force.

Fifthly, nuclear-weapon-free zones remain pivotal for maintaining the international non-proliferation regime and for consolidating international peace and security. Those that have been established in various parts of the world should therefore be welcomed and considered to be positive steps towards attaining the desired objective of nuclear disarmament. Efforts aimed at the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free-zones in all regions of the world are to be both welcomed and encouraged.

In this respect, the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region, as called for in Security Council resolution 487 (1981), relevant General Assembly resolutions and the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, is of paramount importance. With that in mind, my delegation reiterates that Israel is the only State in the Middle East region that has refused to accede to the NPT and has chosen to preserve the nuclear option, and that its accession to the NPT would not only contribute to the universality of the Treaty but would also, at the regional level, defuse existing tensions, bring about tangible progress on other bilateral tracks of the peace process, enhance confidence-building measures between all parties and have an overall positive impact on regional peace and security. The implementation of International Atomic Energy Agency safety measures in all of its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities would furthermore prevent potential nuclear accidents and the risk of radiological contamination.

Sixthly, the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva must be overcome so as to allow for negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material.

With respect to the agenda item on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, my delegation supports the Chairman's proposal that the Commission continue its deliberations on the Chairman's consolidated working paper, as contained in the Commission's 2003 report (A/58/42). We will be responding to and considering the proposals that will be put forward, bearing in mind that while confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms may be a way to strengthen international peace and security, they are not a substitute, nor can they be a precondition, for disarmament measures, but are additional measures that can be undertaken to help in creating an atmosphere conducive to arms control and disarmament.

With that in mind, my delegation fully concurs with the comments made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs in his statement to the Commission yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.269) that the challenge before the Commission is to consider and adopt measures that contribute to reducing the threat to international peace and security while protecting the right of Member States to the means of self-defence. Here, my delegation would add that we must bear in mind the realities and particularities of each region.

My delegation is therefore of the view that transparency in the area of conventional weapons, like confidence-building measures in other areas, cannot be ensured in the absence of an approach that encompasses all aspects related to weapons — all types of weapons — must stem from a balanced treatment of the various elements relating to armaments and must take into account inseparable aspects such as national capacities for production and the procurement and stockpiling of weapons.

As a result, my delegation believes that, in discussions on issues such as transparency or the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the possibility of making the Register more effective as a confidence-building measure or an early-warning mechanism by broadening its scope to include all types of weapons, on a non-selective basis and in line with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, should be seriously taken into consideration, as that would further respond to the security needs of many other States and help forge consensus on this important issue.

Finally, my delegation is looking forward to working actively with you, Mr. Chairman, and all the other members of the Commission in trying to bring about a successful outcome of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2006 session, and look forward to the success of the session under your skilful chairmanship.

At the same time, I feel a sense of relief that this meeting has been made possible after two years of setbacks on the United Nations disarmament course owing to artificial obstacles.

It would be instructive for us to look back on past debates on the nuclear issues in the international arena, including within the United Nations. As we are all aware, certain nuclear-weapon States and their allies forced the debates to be conducted in terms of a conflict of values for domination of the world, rather than in terms of world peace and security to save our planet and mankind from nuclear destruction. For two years, the Disarmament Commission could not even agree on an agenda, thus failing to contribute to actual nuclear disarmament. That shows us that as long the ambition for nuclear supremacy exists, the efforts of the international community for a nuclear-free world will be in vain.

Today, military strength is being mobilized to spread democracy and freedom throughout the world, and nuclear weapons play a main role in that respect. The post-cold-war hopes for a nuclear-free world have all faded away, and threats of nuclear war have increased.

Whether we can show the world's peoples that the debate on nuclear issues in the United Nations is not hypocrisy depends entirely on the nuclear-weapon States. If the nuclear-weapon States respond positively to the calls of the non-nuclear-weapon States for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, great progress would be made in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are inseparably related to each other, and nuclear disarmament has priority over non-proliferation. Within the Security Council and the disarmament machinery, the United States and its allies set out nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as issues separate from each other, and insist on their odd arguments that only nuclear proliferation is a threat to international peace and security — in other words, that if proliferation were contained, there would be no nuclear threats in the world, because their nuclear weapons are not posing any threat at all.

Their insistence on non-proliferation only reflects their ulterior motive — to avoid nuclear disarmament. As long as nuclear weapons and the threat of their use exist, the logical conclusion is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea considers that the nuclear doctrine of the United States is the actual obstacle to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United States has declared the pre-emptive nuclear strike to be its security strategy; it is engrossed in developing new types of nuclear weapons and is applying dual standards in its nuclear policy based on its relations with other countries and its strategic interests. The United States nuclear doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons is a total negation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and an actual threat to world peace and security. The development of new types of nuclear weapons, the threat of pre-emptive nuclear strike and the dual standard policy would inevitably foil the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation effort and instigate a nuclear arms race.

The nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula is a direct product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Bush Administration is pursuing its ambition of regime change by pre-emptive strike, while calling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea part of an

"axis of evil" and a "tyrannical" State. The United States has designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a target of nuclear pre-emptive strike, and has disclosed that it has made new types of nuclear weapons to attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In these compelling circumstances, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no choice other than to engage in nuclear deterrence to counter the ever-growing United States threat of nuclear attack. This is a reasonable exercise of our sovereign rights to defend our territory, people and social system from foreign invasion.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintains the consistent position that the Korean peninsula should be denuclearized. The Beijing Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005 clearly stipulates the obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the principles of simultaneous action needed to fulfil them. However, the United States is demanding that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea give up its nuclear programme first, which not only contradicts reason but also shows that the United States has no interest in finding realistic ways to settle the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula.

How can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put down arms when the United States has not abrogated its hostile policy of defining the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as "the main enemy"? How can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dismantle its nuclear weapons first, when the United States is stepping up nuclear war exercises in preparation for a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons?

When the United States has a mind to coexist with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by abandoning its hostile policy towards it, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will have no need of a single nuclear weapon. The United States should refrain from setting up any further obstacles to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, but show in practical terms its will to fulfil its obligations under the Beijing Joint Statement.

Mr. Ben-Shaban (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your respective elections to the leadership of the Disarmament Commission at its 2006 substantive session. I wish you every success as you fulfil your responsibilities.

International peace and security cannot be achieved if weapons of mass destruction are allowed to go unchecked. Rather, this goal can only be achieved by strengthening the principles of dialogue, understanding and cooperation among peoples, increasing development and fighting disease and poverty. My country is committed to all of these objectives. Indeed, we demonstrated our commitment on 19 December 2003 when we foreswore all weapons of mass destruction. This initiative, which stemmed from our conviction that the arms race cannot enhance world security, has been hailed the world over on a number of occasions. Through this initiative, we want to set an example that the entire world can emulate.

My country attaches great importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions throughout the world. Doing so would strengthen international peace and security everywhere. Notwithstanding the international community's efforts to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the fact that Israel continues to possess nuclear facilities and dozens of nuclear warheads threatens peace and security, not just in the Middle East but in Europe and Asia, and throughout the world. It is a challenge flung in the face of the international community, which through numerous resolutions and decisions adopted here at the United Nations and in regional organizations, has repeatedly shown its determination to achieve progress in those areas.

We welcome this substantive session as well as the collective determination to examine ways and means for strengthening progress towards disarmament. We hope that our discussions and deliberations will lead to a positive outcome. We want these deliberations to be marked by realism and the resulting proposals to be imbued with a realistic approach to disarmament. We feel that other delegations gathered here share this philosophy. If we have not yet managed to achieve a satisfactory outcome or progress in disarmament, it is not because of the weakness of our working methods but because of the lack of political will by various countries to make the necessary strides towards securing international

peace and as called for in numerous United Nations documents that have emerged from disarmament-related sessions.

We are convinced, and we feel this to be a just conviction having demonstrated our sincerity through the initiative I mentioned earlier, that ways and means must be found to reactivate the United Nations disarmament machinery. Here, we agree with the remarks of the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We reaffirm the importance of pooling our efforts to promote progress within the Commission and to reform the United Nations so that we can master the complicated issues before us. With the needed management reform, we shall be in a better position to bring our collective will to bear on the creation of a constructive climate for strengthening the multilateral approach to securing international peace.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in our general exchange of views. I am sure that this exchange will serve as an excellent basis for our work in the Working Groups and in plenary meetings over the next two and a half weeks.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I remind delegations wishing to submit papers for our consideration of measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work to do so in good time for our meeting on Thursday, 13 April.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.273

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

273rd meeting

Thursday, 13 April 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chairman: As members are aware, the Commission has not finished its consideration of the election of the officials for the 2006 substantive session. I have received a letter from the Chairman of the Group of African States informing the Commission that the Group has endorsed Benin as its Vice-Chairman. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Benin as its Vice-Chairman.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Allow me, on the Commission's behalf, to welcome Benin as a new member of the Bureau. I will count on its support and counsel.

We still have to elect the Chair of Working Group I. As promised earlier, I have conducted bilateral consultations with the Groups as well as with some delegations interested in this matter. I believe I have found a suitable candidate in Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou of Benin. I think he has good qualifications, which impression has been confirmed in my initial consultations with delegations, who also found him a suitable candidate for this position. I would like to nominate him as a candidate for the chairmanship of Working Group I. His election would give a good balance to the work of the Commission, because I, as Chairman, am from Asia, our Brazilian colleague, the Chairman of Working Group II, is from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and Mr. Zinsou, of course, is from the African Group.

I would like to urge all members to agree to my proposal. However, I will provide time — until the end of today — for any member who has any other opinion on this nomination to come back to me. Otherwise, we will elect Mr. Zinsou as Chairman of Working Group I at our plenary meeting on Monday afternoon.

Organization of work: Measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Commission

The Chairman: The issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Commission has been included on the agenda in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/492 of 8 September 1998, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which, inter alia, stated in its subparagraph (b) that

> "the substantive agenda of the Disarmament Commission should normally comprise two agenda items per year ... the possibility of a third item would be retained if there was a consensus to adopt such an item".

I would like to recall that an agreement was reached during the open-ended consultations held last year under the chairmanship of Ambassador Rowe to discuss this issue during the present substantive session. In that regard, representatives have before them a conference room paper contained in document

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

06-31009 (E)

A/CN.10/2006/CRP.2, submitted by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce that document.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): Allow me to present the views of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on the issue of improving the working methods of the Disarmament Commission.

NAM is of the view that the multilateral disarmament machinery needs to be strengthened and revitalized. Multilateral forums such as the Disarmament Commission need to be improved and utilized more effectively to implement the Programme of Action contained in the Final Document (resolution S-10/2) of the tenth special session of the General Assembly and to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. NAM has been contributing positively to the advancement of that objective within the framework of the General Assembly and in particular within the context of the First Committee. NAM emphasizes that improving the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission should be undertaken within the overall process of the revitalization of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolutions 58/126, 58/316 and 59/313 in particular.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and as a deliberative body to consider and make recommendations to the General Assembly on various problems in the field of disarmament. Further, NAM would like to reaffirm that the Assembly has been and should continue to be the principal United Nations organ in the field of disarmament and the implementation of disarmament measures.

NAM believes that the provisions contained in General Assembly decision 52/492 of 8 September 1998 aimed at enhancing the efficient functioning of the Disarmament Commission remain relevant. We are of the view that, first, the substantive agenda of the Commission should comprise two agenda items per year, drawn from the whole range of disarmament issues, including one on nuclear disarmament; secondly, the annual substantive session of the Commission should last for three weeks; and thirdly, substantive agenda items should be considered for three years.

NAM underscores that it is important that the Commission function under the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, with such modifications as the Commission may deem necessary, and that it make every effort to ensure that, as far as possible, decisions on substantive issues are adopted by consensus.

NAM believes that the main difficulties confronting the Disarmament Commission are primarily attributable not to the ineffectiveness of its methods of work, but in fact to the stalemates in various disarmament forums resulting from the lack of political will of some Member States to move forward on measures related to nuclear disarmament. How to mobilize political will is, and should be, a more urgent challenge as well as a priority for us all.

Finally, NAM remains open to any proposal to revitalize, rationalize or streamline the work of the Disarmament Commission as an initial step in the direction of reviewing the overall disarmament machinery for the achievement of the principles and priorities contained in the Final Document of the tenth special session.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): The United States is pleased that the Disarmament Commission has decided to allocate equitable time to discuss measures for improving the effectiveness of its methods of work. Our delegation considers this exercise to be in keeping with the ongoing effort to achieve a lasting revolution of reform at the United Nations.

We are all painfully aware of the difficulties that the Commission had to overcome over the past nearly three years to agree on an agenda. The breakthrough last December on our agenda highlighted the necessity of compromise and consensus in multilateral endeavours. Although the Commission has now been revived and is moving forward on substantive issues, it also makes sense for delegations to review the Commission's methods of work, to reflect on ways to improve them and, on a consensual basis, to adopt measures that will enhance its effectiveness.

If there are new approaches that would enable the Disarmament Commission to avoid future interruptions, those should be explored and adopted. Similarly, innovations that could make the Commission more useful and relevant to the security needs of the international community should also be examined and embraced. Our delegation looks forward to listening to

the views of other delegations on this subject and to exchanging ideas on ways to make the Disarmament Commission work smarter and better.

Finally, our delegation wishes to underscore the importance of thoroughness in our work here on improving the Disarmament Commission. We believe that the Commission should engage in a full airing of views and options for improving the effectiveness of its working methods until we achieve a demonstrable and consensual outcome. Only in that manner can we collectively make the Disarmament Commission a more valuable tool for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Charwath (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The European Union regards the Disarmament Commission as an important part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. The Commission, as we all know, is the sole disarmament forum, except for the First Committee, with universal membership and has an important role to play as a deliberative body aimed at formulating recommendations in the broad field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the past, the UNDC has produced important results, such as, for example, the 1996 guidelines for arms transfers and the 1999 UNDC guidelines on conventional arms control and limitation and disarmament, with a particular emphasis on the consolidation of peace, as well as the 1999 guidelines on nuclear-weapon-free zones. We want to see the UNDC continue to play the role of contributing to creating a more secure and peaceful international environment.

It is in that context that we welcome this opportunity to engage in discussions on how to make sure that the UNDC can function effectively and fulfil the role we would all like it to play. The EU therefore supports discussing the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work. For the EU, the central question is: What can we all do to strengthen the UNDC and help ensure that it is able to do its work?

We look forward to an open exchange of views among member States and are willing to look at all constructive proposals to make the UNDC deliver the results we all hope to see as a result of our deliberations during its sessions. We believe that there is great merit in looking at possible practical and pragmatic steps to enhance the very functioning of the UNDC. The EU has always been very constructive in its approach to that issue, as evidenced also by our attitude last year in the discussions about an agenda for this cycle of the UNDC. I would like to assure members that we will continue to do so.

Mr. Cem Işik (Turkey): As this is the first time I have taken the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship and other members of the Bureau on the tasks they have assumed. You have my delegation's full support in your endeavours ahead.

Turkey also believes that the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is an important part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. My country also supports discussing the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the UNDC's methods of work, including possible practical and pragmatic steps to enhance its functioning. Therefore, my country associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Milton (Australia): As my delegation noted in its general debate statement in this Commission, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) must show that it can address today's most pressing international security concerns. To be relevant and credible, the Commission must produce outcomes. It is not enough to meet for meeting's sake.

We agree with the European Union that there is merit in looking at practical and pragmatic steps to enhance the functioning of this body. Australia remains flexible and constructive in its approach and will consider any proposal that will help the UNDC to play a role in contributing to a more secure and peaceful international environment and to respond to today's most pressing threats.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes this opportunity to discuss how to improve the working methods of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I should like to take this opportunity to share some of our views on this matter.

First, the 1978 first special session on disarmament established a multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery that included the First

Committee of the General Assembly, the UNDC and the Conference on Disarmament. As an integral part of that machinery, the UNDC has made useful contributions to promoting the multilateral arms control and disarmament process, and its status and role are irreplaceable. Therefore, any initiative to improve its working methods should be conducive to strengthening rather than to weakening the UNDC.

Secondly, we are of the view that we should approach the issue of improving the working methods of the UNDC objectively and rationally. It should be noted that the main factor impeding the current process of multilateral arms control and disarmament is the lack of political will, rather than procedural or organizational problems. Given its nature as a deliberative body for disarmament matters, the UNDC's main task should be the formulation of guiding principles and recommendations for multilateral arms control and disarmament. That task should not and will not be changed.

Thirdly, we hope that we will bear in mind the need to uphold the authority of the UNDC and proceed on that basis to discussing how to make full use of existing resources and to further enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. My delegation will take an active part in the relevant discussions in an open and flexible manner and will strive tirelessly to safeguard and strengthen the multilateral arms control and disarmament mechanisms.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): I was part of the discussion on placing on the agenda the question of the working methods of the Commission. I thought that some delegations that supported that idea felt that we really needed to discuss the issue, even though we had some reservations about it, because the priority at the time we discussed it was the agenda. We thought that having an agenda and getting the Commission really working was more important than looking at the working methods. However, as part of our own policy of listening to and working and cooperating with other delegations that may have relevant and very good ideas that we may not understand, we agreed that we should discuss this issue.

But again, now that it is on the table, we are still asking ourselves: What is wrong with the working methods of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC)? I think we have to answer that question. What is wrong with them? What are the current methods? Are we talking about reform for its own sake? Just because all the other institutions or organs of the United Nations are going through a reform process, do we want to join that bandwagon, so to speak?

I think we should examine what exactly is wrong with the working methods — not the UNDC as such, but the working methods, which to me relates to the proposal in the working paper of the Non-Aligned Movement, which deals with the range of issues. When we talk about working methods, we are talking about the cycle. Is there anything wrong with the previous cycle? Is there anything wrong with having two agenda items? Do we want four agenda items, or do we want just one? Those are questions we must be asking when we talk about the working methods.

Do we want to amend or adjust the rules of procedure? We are working on the basis of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. To what extent can we adjust that to the realities of the Commission itself? How far can we go? This has nothing to do with the substantive issues of the Commission. Other delegations have been talking about lack of political will. I think that we should separate the political aspects of the so-called reform or revitalization from procedural issues.

As far as we see it, the issue of working methods is a procedural one. We went through the process in the First Committee. We talked about biennialization, shorter draft resolutions, trying to avoid overlaps and repetitions, and so forth. My delegation made a contribution to the process, and submitted a working paper and, as a member of the Bureau, working with Ambassador De Alba two years ago, we were interested in the effort to revitalize the working methods of the First Committee. We have done that. So we find it very difficult to understand the rationale of spending so much time on the working methods in terms of procedure.

As far as the working methods are concerned — apart from questions relating to the rules of procedure and the cycle of agenda items — the Commission used to hold two sessions annually. Now we have only one. Do we need two?

I think the question of decision-making is an important one. The Non-Aligned Movement proposal refers to the general tradition that we should try, as far as possible, to ensure that decisions on substantive

issues are made by consensus. From my delegation's point of view, perhaps we should examine the whole issue of consensus. Let us look at what happened last year, when we were trying to get an agenda — or the simple matter of even having a First Committee draft resolution on the report of the Commission. How painful that process was, because we were trying to get consensus.

So if we talk about the effectiveness of our working methods, we might want to re-examine that. We do not have any proposals about that, but I think that it falls within the orbit of the idea of revitalization of working methods.

Then there is another issue: the relationship between the various parts of the disarmament machinery. Paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 60/91 — the most recent resolution on the report of the Disarmament Commission —

> "Reaffirms also the importance of further enhancing the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament".

When we talk about revitalization or working methods, we may want to look into that. I do not see any dialogue between us and our colleagues in Geneva. The report of the Conference is sent to the Commission annually. The report of the First Committee is also sent to the Commission. What do we do with them? The Conference itself has been discussing its improved and effective functioning. Its most recent report states that:

> "The importance of the improved and effective functioning of the Conference was addressed by delegates in plenary meetings. Their views on the issue are duly reflected in the plenary records" (*A/60/27, para. 17*).

Is there a possibility that we can have a dialogue, within existing resources, between the Conference and the Commission? Would it help? Would it improve our effectiveness? To summarize, these are the issues that we should be looking into: the cycle of the work of the Commission, the number of items on the agenda, the question of the rules of procedure, decision-making, the whole idea of consensus, and the relationship between the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament — the whole idea of dialogue.

Again, I wanted to show that we would like to hear specific recommendations on this. As we mentioned last Monday, we hope that we will be able to make at least some recommendations to the Assembly. We cannot go on for the next three years talking about improving the effectiveness of the Commission. We would like to see, specifically, on paper, what is wrong: first of all, we must identify what is wrong with the working methods. If we do not know what is wrong, we cannot fix it. What are the weaknesses? Are there, in fact, weaknesses? I am referring not to political issues, but to the working methods.

The Chairman: I thank Ambassador Rowe of Sierra Leone for his thought-provoking questions. They come from someone who conducted consultations that produced agreement on the inclusion of this issue on our agenda today.

I fully agree with him that we need to get to specific discussions on issues: we are supposed to discuss working methods here, so we need to discuss those methods. I think that the list of issues that he gave us to talk about is a good starting point, and I would like to encourage all member States to look at those issues and come back to us with their views and comments on them when we have another plenary meeting on this matter.

Mr. Dos Santos (Brazil): I would like to make a few comments in the ongoing debate on the working methods of the Disarmament Commission.

As we discuss the issue of how the Disarmament Commission could effectively improve its methods of work, we should not simply reiterate that little progress has been made in the past and that important processes have been reversed. We believe that the difficulties in improving the effectiveness of the Commission over recent years must be overcome, bearing in mind that among member States priorities necessarily vary and that the will to implement commitments may vary likewise.

In that regard, we support the comment made by our colleague from Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement that the main difficulties confronting the Commission are attributable primarily not to the ineffectiveness of its method of work, but to the overall strategic stalemate in various disarmament forums and the lack of political will by some States to

move forward on matters of key importance for international peace and security.

Even though we believe that the main problem is more political than administrative, let me make some concrete proposals that we believe could be useful in our debate.

First, the early election of the Bureau could facilitate follow-up on agreed subjects, as well as allow for the convening of advanced consultations with a view to the following sessions. Secondly, consideration of the best use of time should be respectful of the right of delegations to express freely whatever they deem important and of the need to grant to each of them the appropriate amount of time. Thirdly, the possibility of excluding some agenda items should be carefully examined on a case-by-case basis.

As my delegation mentioned in the general exchange of views (see A/CN.10/PV.269), this is a deliberative body with universal participation, dedicated to a long-term discussion of disarmament issues with a view to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Its location within the purview of the General Assembly means that it is the right place to hold thematic discussions on disarmament issues as they relate to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is not a body that negotiates legally binding agreements, and therefore it does not operate under the constraints that characterize such negotiations.

I wish to conclude by recalling that new formal procedures and administrative arrangements are not enough for the United Nations membership to adopt the measures required for the revitalization of the Disarmament Commission. Root causes of the current political decline of the disarmament machinery have to be addressed. As we know, proposals abound. What we collectively need now is sufficient political will to adopt and implement them.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation): As my delegation stated during the general exchange of views (see A/CN.10/PV.271) and as stressed by some delegations in this room, we do not see the necessity of dismantling the existing triad in multilateral disarmament, namely, the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. I would also stress that my delegation believes that it is important to take decisions on the question of the reform or improvement of methods of work of the Commission within this room and among the whole membership of this Commission, rather than wait until other bodies decide on the future of the Disarmament Commission. We all anticipate the discussion in the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's mandates report (A/60/733). I believe that this matter may also be raised in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. Those bodies may decide, inter alia, questions of funding and may press the Commission into taking decisions based on decisions of other bodies and may otherwise require the Commission to accommodate provisions of the overall reform of the United Nations.

We also support the view that when we are talking about improving the methods of work or the rationalization of the work of the Disarmament Commission, we are talking about the effectiveness and the outcome of our work, rather than the number of meetings we have and the duration of our discussion of the items before us. Because agreement might be reached on a certain issue within a single session. For example, in Working Group II, the discussion is based on the document which had been produced in 2003 and might not need to be extended for another period. Hence, my delegation is not particularly attached to the three-year period format. We can, of course, live with decisions that have already been taken and are ready to work on the basis of the programme work that has already been adopted.

As we discuss improving the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission and the outcome of our work, we need to take into consideration the final decisions the Commission will take. As was mentioned by other delegations, perhaps only three or four of the documents produced by the Disarmament Commission are being recalled at our meetings. On the one hand, this shows that the Disarmament Commission can indeed play an effective and important role by providing recommendations and guidelines in certain areas. But, on the other hand, even when the Commission issues a final document or comes to a final conclusion, those decisions are not subsequently being implemented, inter alia through multilateral agreements. In this regard, my delegation supports the viewpoint just stated by the representative of Sierra Leone regarding the necessity of a dialogue between the Chairs of the Disarmament Commission, the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, on

what can be called the distribution of labour. In the opinion of my delegation, the Disarmament Commission should play the role of integrator of ideas that can be implemented later on or laid down as a basis for further multilateral agreements. In order to do this, I believe it will be important for all of us — maybe not this year but starting next year — while debating the improvement of the effectiveness of the work of the Disarmament Commission, to start thinking about future agenda items for the Disarmament Commission for the next period.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission.

I have several general comments and proposals. In our view, in spite of the successful efforts of the international community through the existing disarmament machinery — for example, treaties and instruments like the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) prohibiting biological weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) mandating the total destruction of chemical weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) which comprehensively bans nuclear tests, as well as the guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the principles for verification — this mechanism has unfortunately faced setbacks and has not produced satisfactory results in recent years.

While we believe that such setbacks are due mainly to the lack of political will, we share the view that the Commission could discuss possible measures for improving the effectiveness of its methods of work. There has been a similar effort in the First Committee, which indeed resulted in the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 58/41 and 59/95. In these resolutions, the Assembly reaffirmed its role in dealing with questions of disarmament and related international issues, consistent with the functions and powers of the Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments as stipulated in Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations.

We should not forget that over the years the Disarmament Commission has prepared consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations on a great number of subjects, which have been approved by the General Assembly. At the same time, the Disarmament Commission has gradually focused its work on a limited number of agenda items at each session. In 1989, the Commission had a maximum of four items, but since then it has decreased the agenda items to two items with the possibility of a third, each of which has usually been discussed for three consecutive years.

In 1998, by its consensus decision 52/492, the General Assembly decided that, as of 2000, the agenda would normally comprise two substantive items. We should not lose sight of the fact that this decision has been implemented only once, from 2000 to 2003, but the result was not satisfactory. One item was near consensus, and the other item was discussed thoroughly in the substantive sessions. Therefore, as stated by the representative of NAM, the provisions contained in decision 52/492 to enhance the efficient functioning of the Disarmament Commission remain relevant, and the substantive agenda of the Commission should comprise two agenda items per year drawn from the whole range of disarmament issues, including one on nuclear disarmament, with the possibility, of course, of a third item.

My delegation would also like to underline that, as agreed before, the Commission, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, should function under the Assembly's rules of procedure, with necessary modifications, of course, and decisions on substantive issues should be adopted by consensus.

Having said that, we have some ideas that we would like to share with the members of the Commission. We believe that, while the Commission should reaffirm decision 52/492, there could be a recommendation that it try to adopt its agenda at the organizational session so as to give enough time before the substantive session to the Chairman to hold informal consultations on matters before the Commission.

The other idea is to urge member States to distribute their position papers on the agenda items, if any, and the chairmen of the working groups to distribute their own working papers well in advance of the substantive session in order to give the States members of the UNDC ample time to get views and instructions from their respective capitals.

In conclusion, in reaction to some of the questions raised by the Ambassador of Sierra Leone, we think the UNDC has already limited its agenda items to two. Indeed, that is a balanced approach that has been taken as a result of a gradual process over the years. Indeed, as I mentioned, in 1989, it had four items on the agenda, and limited the items to two as of 2000.

The major problem, as was stated by the Non-Aligned Movement, is the lack of political will and, however clever and smart the procedures and methods of work, unfortunately they cannot solve that problem. But we remain optimistic that perhaps we could improve the effectiveness of the methods of the UNDC.

The Chairman: Regarding the proposals made by the representative of Iran and one of the issues he raised about the adoption of our agenda, I think this year we adopted the agenda at the organizational session. We did that, but I think that he is suggesting that we make it more of an institution.

Another issue he raised is about working papers to be presented in advance. For that, we would need to organize the Commission well in advance. This year, we still have to elect one of our working group chairmen, so under the circumstances it would be extremely difficult to expect working papers to come out in advance.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): My delegation also associates itself with the views expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement. Our delegation would, however, like to make a few comments in addition. We have listened very carefully to the views expressed by other delegations as well.

As we stated in our statement during the exchange of views, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is being convened in a larger context. As we said, there are clear differences of perspective, approach and modalities for dealing with disarmament and other issues. That is the larger context in which we consider the agenda item on improving the working methods as well.

As we see it, the issue of improving the working methods is a matter both of substance and of procedure. We share the view that the UNDC needs to be strengthened and revitalized. We also share the view that it should be enabled to deliver the results that it has been able to deliver in the past and that it has the potential to deliver in the future. The main challenge is: How do we do it?

We share the view expressed by many delegations that we need a fuller exchange of views and dialogue, and we think that perhaps, as a part of that larger exchange of views, the Commission could consider the larger issue of how to develop common approaches and modalities to deal with nuclear and conventional disarmament.

As we said in our statement, the Commission could consider the possibility of convening its own special session to evolve and develop a new security consensus. That is what is required. As many delegations have stated, it is not a question of procedure; it is a question of political will, and we can make headway only if we have an agreement or a consensus on the major issues.

Mr. Prasad (India): We welcome this opportunity to cogitate on improving the methods of work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and would like to share at this conjecture our very brief comments.

My delegation first associates itself with the statement made on the subject by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Commission, as a universal body, reflects the interests of all States Members of the United Nations and therefore, as a deliberative body, its work has special value. As part of the triad concerning disarmament, the Commission has intrinsic strengths which must therefore be preserved. It has notable achievements to its credit, as we recalled in our general statement, in formulating principles, guidelines and recommendations on a whole range of issues on the contemporary disarmament agenda.

We also agree with the view already expressed that the problems of the global disarmament machinery, including the Commission, are located not in processes but in politics. We are nevertheless prepared to consider practical, constructive and pragmatic measures to improve the functioning of the Commission. Those could, perhaps, come principally through housekeeping improvements, which even the best of institutions require from time to time.

The bottom line for us is that our present exercise should not weaken, but rather strengthen the role of the

Commission, restore credibility to its functioning, and enable it once again to contribute to global disarmament efforts.

Mr. Rodriguez Zahar (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is my first statement at this session, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the Bureau.

I would like simply to offer a few thoughts which may sound a little pessimistic. I agree with almost everything that the Ambassador of Sierra Leone said, and I also agree with the assessment made by the Non-Aligned Movement in its document, especially the paragraph that mentions the lack of political will on the part of certain States to deal with certain subjects and make progress in those areas. The paralysis that afflicts the disarmament machinery clearly reflects that.

However, we must also recognize that there is a lack of political will on the part of States in general to change their practices and working methods. We must recognize that, aside from the rhetoric we have heard to the effect that the will exists to consider new, practical measures, the fact of the matter is that States all are to blame. We all bear responsibility for not being willing to change our practices. This applies to simple issues, ranging from the one mentioned by Iran of distributing documents before meetings, to more substantive issues, such as the ones mentioned by the representatives of Sierra Leone and of Brazil. We see no willingness at all to modify our practices when it comes to the use of our time, nor is there any will at all to make further changes as concerns agenda items. In short, we see very little will on the part of States truly to change their practices.

It is not a problem only in the Commission; it is a widespread one that affects the Organization as a whole. Discussions on the question of revitalization have taken the form of hollow rhetoric, and I do not think that is going to accomplish anything.

Really, that is all I wanted to say. Perhaps my comments may sound a little harsh, but I think they are realistic. We are, in a way, caught in a trap — between certain States that do not wish to discuss particular issues or make progress on them, and the rest of the members, which do not wish to change their practices either. That is where we stand.

Mr. Landman (Netherlands): I am taking the floor because I am, unfortunately, leaving at the end of the week; my deputies will take over thereafter. But I am somewhat regretful that we have not made more progress during this first week, which represents one third of the time that is available to us.

Now, focusing on the subject at hand and having listened carefully to all the contributions, I can see that, at least, there is common ground, in the sense that we all want to strengthen this body, which we all feel still has great potential — a conclusion reached based on its utility in the past. Furthermore, this body has a clear, dual complementarity. There is complementarity with respect to the First Committee, in the sense that the First Committee is highly political and has to work very fast, while this is really a deliberative forum — a forum for in-depth reflection. In terms of numbers, there is also complementarity with respect to the Conference on Disarmament, because the Conference, of course, has only 65 members, while all Members of the United Nations are represented here. This body therefore has clear importance and a clear use.

In concrete terms, I am always struck, in the United Nations framework, by how much time is spent on generalities. In that sense, I very much appreciate the very pertinent questions posed by our colleague from Sierra Leone — questions that have to be answered. I took note of some concrete points, and I would like to dwell on one particular one on which I have very strong feelings, on the basis of my rather lengthy multilateral experience in other multilateral forums. I would, indeed, align myself with some of the suggestions that have been put forward.

A word of caution on the idea, raised earlier, that we could focus on one subject instead of two. At first blush, this sounds very interesting, because that would allow us more time and a more in-depth discussion. However, I can tell the Commission that this has been tried in many other forums, and it has never worked. So aside from the fact that it will make it even more difficult to come to any kind of compromise — because, in a multilateral framework, one always has to compromise, so that everyone can feel that their concerns have been, in essence, taken on board — and aside from the fact that it will be even more difficult to reach agreement on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, the Commission will find that discussing only one subject never works. There will be long silences and gaps. Let us not attempt to reinvent the wheel.

Now as regards concrete proposals, on the basis of our recent experience I would favour the composition of the Bureau in advance, in a timely manner. We have lost a full week with respect to the important work of the Commission, which is the basic reason I am here, for instance — in vain. For those who take the trouble to come here from Geneva, it is important that our time be well spent. In that sense, my experience does not bode too well for the future.

There is another advantage. Indeed, a proposal was made to present papers in advance so as to limit general statements to the extent possible and to truly focus on what we want to achieve at this session. We must be focused. We spend too much time on generalities.

These are two concrete proposals that truly merit attention. I hope that, in further deliberations, we will come up with additional good ideas.

Mr. Minami (Japan): I shall be brief. Japan, like many other countries, attaches great importance to the consensus reached among Member States with regard to the new agenda item on measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission.

I do not wish to reiterate my previous statement, made in plenary, on the mandate. We have to dispel, through intensive deliberations on the effectiveness of our methods of work, the bad reputation that the Disarmament Commission has acquired in the past few years.

Japan is prepared actively to participate in such discussions so as to meet the high expectations of the international community.

These are just general remarks; Japan will present concrete proposals in a later statement, if necessary.

Mr. Despax (France) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor at the present session, permit me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship and, through you, to congratulate all the other members of the Bureau. In addition, I am pleased at the announcement that this afternoon, you nominated our Beninese colleague in the Bureau as a Vice-Chairperson. I also welcome the presence of Ambassador Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

My delegation is pleased to see the Disarmament Commission resume its substantive work this year, after several years of hiatus. We see the agreement reached on the agenda as an encouraging sign. Today, the Chairman has invited us to engage in an exchange of views on the issue of improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Commission.

Obviously, my delegation fully subscribes to the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union, which set out a number of general principles to guide the joint activities of the 25 Union members related to that subject.

The multilateral disarmament architecture governing us today is well known. It comprises three key elements, some have called it a triad. The first is negotiation, which some here know well because they come from Geneva: the Conference on Disarmament, which has a limited membership — 65 member States. Secondly, there is research, which is often forgotten but which is important to us in Geneva: the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, designed to provide States, the Secretary-General and the Department for Disarmament Affairs with appropriate expertise on security and disarmament issues. And thirdly, there are deliberations with universal membership, which we in New York know very well: the General Assembly's First Committee and the Disarmament Commission, which is meeting today. While the First Committee is often limited by political and scheduling constraints, the Disarmament Commission has greater freedom to discuss security problems involving both the issue of weapons of mass destruction and that of conventional weapons.

The issue that brings us together today is: what contribution can the Disarmament Commission make to our common objective, the strengthening of international peace and security? In the view of my delegation, it must be to respond to the traditional and new threats facing the world. The European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003 by the heads of State or Government of the European Union lists five: terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, regional conflicts, the failure of States, and organized crime. Only by responding to those threats will we strengthen the multilateral disarmament machinery, to which we are all deeply committed. If we fail to do so, there would be a great risk that our forums would be circumvented for sui generis or ad hoc forums with

limited, non-universal membership, whose main drawback or handicap is their lack of legitimacy and thus their lack of effectiveness. In that regard, the importance of consensus is crucial.

France supports all concrete and realistic initiatives that can enhance the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work. Together with its European partners, France will contribute to such initiatives in the context of the European discussions that we are to have on that subject in the next few days. Thus, we will come back to the Disarmament Commission under the aegis of the Austrian presidency.

But let us make no mistake: this exercise cannot replace the necessary political will of States to make the best possible use of the current architecture, which was laid down nearly 30 years ago, while adapting it to the security challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I just wanted to observe that I think we are off to a very good start. I have heard at last half a dozen concrete proposals advanced this morning, in addition to the guideposts for broad discussion that the representative of Sierra Leone presented. So I think we have some meat on the table.

I would also caution against rejecting out of hand at the outset any particular proposal or idea, including the idea of one issue per session. Everything is on the table as far as the United States is concerned. I would like to encourage that approach on the part of other Governments as well as we move forward.

I have one final request. If it were possible for the Secretariat to issue a revised schedule of meetings once the selection process for Working Group I has been completed so that we can see exactly how much time we have left for each issue, I would be grateful.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of the United States for his suggestion regarding a work programme. I would like to assure him that the Bureau is working on a revised work programme and will issue it soon.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): I would like to hear reactions to the ideas concerning the relationship between the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission in terms of dialogue. That is not only because it was mentioned in paragraph 3 of last year's resolution on the report of the Disarmament Commission (resolution 60/91), but also — and this may be a provocative statement — because, from our perspective, the Conference on Disarmament is becoming a bit more of a deliberative organ and less of a negotiating body, when the Conference is stuck in terms of negotiation. Here we need only look at the report of the Conference. I hope that if some members of the Conference are here with us today, they will not beat me over the head for saying this, but it appears that when there is an ebb in their work, when they have no negotiation and are stuck, that encroaches on our own work to a large extent. So in my view, the Conference on Disarmament is becoming, as I said, more of a deliberative body than a negotiating body.

We might want to look into some of that. Perhaps this is just the view of one delegation, but again, institutionally speaking and in terms of the mandate entrusted to us by the General Assembly, there must be this kind of dialogue. How it will be worked out and what its format will be will have to be determined, but I think we should look seriously into it.

The Chairman: At this stage, I would like to invite Mr. Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to share his observations on this issue with us.

Mr. Tanaka (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I have listened very attentively to the discussion this morning. Since this is the first time I have sat in this body, I naturally have my own observations. I shall be rather brief. But perhaps, coming from outside, I might have a different perspective. I hope that we will be able to discuss some of my observations at a later stage next week.

The first impression that I have had, listening to this body, is that certainly the subject itself has such a wide spectrum, so it is very difficult to pinpoint what we are discussing. It is like kicking a ball in a huge soccer stadium — there are many balls rolling around in this corner or that corner — and discussion tends to be dispersed and sometimes not really focused.

Also, as members know, disarmament is closely associated with the security situation of today, and the situation is moving and the world is constantly changing. Of course, political will is constantly changing too. Somehow, the three-year term of the agenda that we are discussing does not really fit into that kind of changing situation. Maybe next week, when we get into the working group, all those

problems may be solved and we may have more focused discussions and a greater convergence of views on certain issues. But my distinct impression is that, perhaps, the subject matter is so vast and so varied. Furthermore, this plenary is a body in which to air statements; therefore, it is very difficult for us to really exchange views.

All in all, I have a certain impression, for the first time sitting in this body, that perhaps we need some way to develop and to help the discussion to be more focused. From that perspective, I have two observations.

The first is that, in the usual multilateral bodies of which I have had experience over many years, the Secretariat has played the crucial role of providing certain papers, opinions or expert reviews. Of course, we are all aware that a reform plan is going on in the United Nations and we should avoid writing any unnecessary papers. I would certainly agree to that. At the same time, for example, if we broach the issue of confidence-building measures, there are many such measures, including regional and thematic, but the discussion on confidence-building measures tends to be unfocused. Thus, perhaps from time to time, just a short paper from the Secretariat describing the confidence-building measure might help. I am not quite sure. I have, of course, to reflect on what I have thought and said today in the following days and week to come, but perhaps sometimes the Secretariat's interaction might be helpful.

Also in the same vein, outside experts, who would give members a certain focus on thematic issues, might help delegations to discuss certain issues. Such ways to help focus the discussions of this body might lead to more substantive exchanges among delegations. It is, of course, presumptuous of me to give my opinions after spending just five days listening to what members have discussed, but I thought that this would be the most opportune moment to talk about it because we are fortunate to be given the opportunity to discuss procedural issues today. So perhaps this is the moment when I should speak. That is why I took the floor.

The Chairman: I thank Under-Secretary-General Tanaka for sharing his views on this important issue. On behalf of the Commission, I can assure him that we highly appreciate the contribution of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and look forward to more contributions from it in the future.

Having said that, I think we have had a very good initial round of discussions on this issue. As I announced earlier, we will continue our discussion on the same issue on Monday afternoon. I think, for the benefit of our next meeting, I would like to try to summarize what I have been hearing from delegations today.

I think most of them have been talking about five or six issues, the first of which is the role of the Disarmament Commission in general. Several representatives talked about how effective and relevant the Disarmament Commission is in the context of the overall United Nations machinery on disarmament. I do not know if that will constitute part of our discussion on working methods, but that is what some delegations raised and I think it has to do with our evaluation of the working methods in general. That was one issue.

Secondly, I think many representatives talked about the Commission's agenda in the context of whether the current three-year cycle is proper or whether the number of issues we are dealing with is appropriate. Do we need more issues or fewer? Those are certainly questions raised by some delegations.

Thirdly, some representatives also talked about the modality of the meetings we now have and whether the length of the plenary substantive session is suitable. Are three weeks long enough or too brief? Do we need any additional meetings, such as in a special session? Those are some of the questions they raised.

Fourthly, we heard some representatives talk about organizational issues, such as the composition of the Bureau and documentation. Can we agree to the formation of the Bureau earlier than we are doing now so that we can have it in advance and let its members prepare themselves for this session? Can we have the papers well in advance? Those are some of the questions raised.

Fifthly, I also think that some representatives talked about the rules of procedure, including the decision-making methods we now have, based on consensus. We might want to look at those rules and see if we can make any improvement on them.

Lastly, I think several representatives talked about relations between the Disarmament Commission

and other bodies dealing with disarmament, such as the First Committee or the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

For the next meeting on Monday, I would like to encourage all members to come up with more concrete ideas and views on those issues and any others they think should be discussed in the context of improvements to our working methods. My game plan after that is that, after we have another meeting on this issue and listen to more countries — and representatives who spoke today can be more specific next time — as I promised, I will try to form a "friends of the chair" on this issue, probably a couple of them, so that they can work with all member States with a view to coming up with any products or conclusion to this discussion we are now having. Possibly, the friends will also use the form of informal meetings, if there is any need, in addition to the formal plenary meetings we now have.

Having said that, there will be a Working Group II meeting this afternoon, starting at 3 p.m. in the same conference room. I will see members next at 3 p.m. next Monday in the same conference room again.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.274

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

274th meeting

Monday, 17 April 2006, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Election of officers

The Chairman: As members are aware, at our last meeting I nominated Mr. Jean-Francis Zinsou of Benin for the chairmanship of Working Group I. In that regard, I am happy to report to the Commission that, since our meeting last Thursday, I have heard no differing opinion on that nomination. Therefore, I would like to propose that we elect Mr. Zinsou as Chairman of Working Group I. May I take it that the Commission decides to elect Mr. Jean-Francis Zinsou of Benin as Chairman of Working Group I?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I congratulate Mr. Jean-Francis Zinsou on his election and wish him good luck and productive work in his new, important assignment.

Organization of work

The Chairman: We made a good start last Thursday on today's agenda item. We now have before us a conference room paper on the issue from the Non-Aligned Movement, and we have heard statements by a number of delegations on this matter.

As I stated at our previous meetings, I also intend to form a group of friends of the chair with respect to the third issue related to the measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work. The friends of the chair will be assisting me in guiding the discussions, and probably will help also to draft a non-paper on the methods of work.

I am happy to inform the Commission that one of the friends of the chair will be a person well-known to all representatives, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, who kindly agreed to help me in that regard.

I am still searching for the other person to be included in the friends of the chair and will let representatives know his or her name in due course.

Finally, on organizational matters, I would like to bring members' attention to a revised programme of work contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.1/Rev.1. The programme was adjusted to reflect the current scheduled work of the Commission for the remaining two weeks. I understand that the document was circulated last Thursday, but if anyone does not have a copy, it is available from the conference officers at the back of the conference room.

Are there are any comments on the revised programme of work?

I understand that no one wishes to comment on the revised programme of work. If I hear no objection, may I take it that the Commission takes note of the revised programme of work?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I shall now open the floor for further comments, observations and proposals under

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06-32299 (E)

the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work.

Before doing so, let me share with the Commission my plans concerning the item we are discussing. We now have at least one friend of the Chairman, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe, who will chair our next meeting, on Wednesday, on this same issue. It will be an informal plenary meeting, with no record. I will prepare, with the help of the Secretariat, a draft summary of last Thursday's and today's discussions. We will circulate the draft summary by Wednesday morning, and it will serve as a basis for our informal discussions, to be held on Wednesday afternoon and which will be chaired by Ambassador Sylvester Rowe.

Does any representative wish to comment on this plan?

If not, I shall open the floor for discussions in continuation of the debate held last Thursday on this issue.

Mr. Rachkov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The statement made by the Ambassador of Sierra Leone on Thursday was a very important one. However, I should like to know precisely what aspects of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission are not agreeable to delegations? What is it that is having a negative impact on the results of our work, and what, therefore, requires reform?

My delegation believes that the intensity and the nature of the work done this year by the Disarmament Commission on enhancing its methods of work clearly show that, in and of themselves, the methods of work are, on the whole, acceptable. They are not an obstacle to achieving productive results in the Commission. Moreover, I should like to emphasize that previous decisions taken by the General Assembly, such as decision 52/492, which is aimed at enhancing the efficient functioning of the Commission — not its methods of work — are well-thought-out decisions that give some leeway for manoeuvring. Some of the questions raised during previous meetings were, in fact, resolved in that decision. The amount of time devoted to discussing specific questions could be changed, if necessary, on the basis of a consensus decision taken by the Commission.

Decision 52/492 also contains language which urges the early election of the Chairpersons of the working groups at the fall session so that they can hold preliminary consultations. At previous meetings, we discussed the use of the consensus rule in adopting decisions. Would that enhance the Commission's productiveness?

I would note here that, given the fact that there is universal participation in this disarmament body, only the principle of consensus can be acceptable in this forum. As was quite rightly noted on Thursday by the representative of the Russian Federation, some problems exist with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission adopted at its previous sessions.

In our view, departing from the principle of consensus on such recommendations makes it even less likely that they will actually be implemented. With regard to enhancing the cooperation between the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee, my delegation is prepared to discuss specific proposals if the opportunity arises.

Ms. Freedman (United Kingdom): First of all, I would like to stress that I associate myself with the statement delivered by the Austrian representative on 13 April on behalf of the European Union (EU). As stated by the presidency of the European Union, the United Kingdom also confirms that it continues to regard the Disarmament Commission as a vital element of the wider United Nations disarmament machinery.

The United Kingdom welcomes the general exchange of views to date on the issue of improving the methods of work of the Commission. In that regard, we welcome the contributions made to date by a wide number of delegations, as well as the interventions made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. We hope also to have substantive proposals to put forward at a future date as part of a coordinated EU position.

The United Kingdom feels strong sympathy with the approach presented by the delegation of Sierra Leone last Thursday on identifying questions before coming up with the answers that would help the Commission deliver on its objectives. We agree that reform should be a means to an end and not an end in itself.

On 13 April, questions were raised regarding the length of the cycle and the modality of the meetings of the Disarmament Commission. The United Kingdom

does not have a fixed position on these issues other than the fact that we want a more efficient Commission. We believe that there might be merit in hearing colleagues' views on, for instance, whether a one-year Disarmament Commission would achieve better or worse results than the current three-year format, or whether a Disarmament Commission that met more frequently might be better placed to agree on recommendations than the current format.

Mr. Chairman, we welcome the idea of an informal session on Wednesday afternoon, as you suggested. More generally, we would also be interested in hearing the Chairman's opinion on what he views as the outcome of our deliberations on this particular issue. It strikes us that we might be able to reach rapid agreement on a number of issues, for example, the commitment of Member States to the Disarmament Commission's playing a vital role within the wider United Nations disarmament machinery; the need for greater dialogue between the chairpersons of the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee; and the need for the Chairperson and the Bureau to be appointed early, possible at the time of the session of the First Committee, in order to facilitate the Commission's work.

We hope that the final document will also reflect other practical measures that will make a difference to our work as well as those areas that might require further work sometime in the future.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): Allow me to make some further comments on the issue of working methods.

As a follow-up to resolution 52/12 B of 1997, the Disarmament Commission undertook a review towards rationalizing and streamlining its methods of work. As the result of that review, a number of recommendations were put forward by the Commission to the General Assembly. Those recommendations were finally adopted as decision 52/492. In fact, that decision has been applied only once, during the 2000-2003 cycle. As we meet here today, the Commission is starting for only the second time to implement all the provisions of decision 52/492. Therefore, in my view, it is rather too early to decide whether the provisions of that decision are already obsolete or have been overtaken by current developments.

I share the view expressed early in our discussion by the representative of Sierra Leone, who asked what was wrong with the working methods of the Commission. Perhaps I should ask a follow-up question: how can we improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission if we keep changing our mandate or the guidelines of our work? I believe that, as some delegations have stated, our problems are not actually related to the methods of work of the Commission. For example, on Thursday, one delegation proposed that the Commission deal with only one agenda item instead of two, and others suggested that the period of three years might be too long to consider the agenda items.

If we look at the past, we will find that the Commission had been dealing with three agenda items, plus one issue involving the working methods. But in the end, the Commission managed to come up with very good recommendations, for example the 1999 guidelines on nuclear-weapon-free zones and the outcome on conventional arms control. That proves that the question is not related to the number of agenda items we have or the duration of our consideration of the items.

Perhaps, as the representative of Belarus stated earlier, we should look more closely at decision 52/492. In particular, in points (b) and (c) it is clearly stated that it is possible for the Commission to have more than two agenda items and even to consider other options for the duration of its deliberations, as long as they are decided by consensus.

With regard to the proposal to have early elections for the Bureau, including for the Chairs of the working groups, point (e) of decision 52/492 envisaged such a possibility. Therefore, my delegation can support the proposal in the hope that, if it can be implemented, we could also carry out the idea of having working papers circulated in advance.

Concerning the rules of procedure — particularly with regard to the Commission's decision-making process — the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly (S-10/2) clearly stated, in paragraph 118 (b), that the Commission "shall make every effort to ensure that, in so far as possible" — I would like to underline "insofar as possible" — "decisions on substantive issues be adopted by consensus". That procedure was, in fact, confirmed by decision 52/492.

However, we have to recognize that the Commission is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Therefore, in my view, in certain circumstances it is not necessary that the decisions of the Commission be taken on the basis of consensus. In other words, in such cases, the General Assembly's rules of procedure may be applied to the work of the Commission.

With regard to the proposal to encourage dialogue among the disarmament mechanisms, we have no difficulty supporting it. In fact, in 1998, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission underlined that there was a need for a complementarity of efforts among those mechanisms — the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission — to consider substantive issues. Unfortunately, however, since that time, one of the mechanisms, the Conference on Disarmament, has not done any substantive work; this year will mark the tenth anniversary of its stalemate. So I do not know; perhaps the idea of promoting such dialogue among the mechanisms is premature.

The last point I would like to make is that, on the basis of what was stated by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union on Thursday, we look forward to and are open to hearing what kinds of practical and pragmatic proposals that the Union will submit to the Commission for our consideration. I would also like to welcome your proposal, Mr. Chairman, to have informal consultations on Wednesday. We are ready to work on the basis of the paper that you are going to circulate on that issue.

Mr. Choi Hong-ghi (Republic of Korea): My delegation also welcomes this opportunity to deliberate on measures for improving the effectiveness of the working methods of the Disarmament Commission. As we pointed out during the general exchange of views last Tuesday, achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness is a matter not of choice, but of necessity.

New challenges have made inevitable the recent reform efforts throughout the United Nations. The Disarmament Commission is no exception. This is not the first time that we have deliberated the issue of Commission reform. At the 1990 substantive session, reform was also discussed, while in 1998 the General Assembly adopted its decision 52/492 on this topic. The principles of that decision are being applied at the current session. Nevertheless, in this time of reform, there is still something that can be done to improve the working methods of the Disarmament Commission and to put new ideas into practice. My delegation would like to make several comments and suggestions that we believe could be helpful with regard to improving the working methods of the Disarmament Commission.

First of all, my delegation shares the view that this examination of the working methods of the Disarmament Commission should be carried out with a view to reaffirming the importance of the Commission and strengthening its mandate as the only body in the United Nations system for in-depth deliberation on disarmament issues that has universal membership. Furthermore, we believe that the current principle of deciding substantive issues by consensus should be maintained.

As previous speakers have stated, in decision 52/492 the General Assembly urged the regional groups to make possible the early election of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, preferably at the organizational session of the Commission in the autumn. We believe that the Chairs of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies should be elected as early as possible — at least three months before the substantive session starts — so that they have enough time to prepare adequately for their responsibilities. Early elections would also enable member States to be better prepared for the deliberations and would provide time for intensive informal pre-sessions at which major differences could be ironed out, facilitating more in-depth debate and increasing the effectiveness of the formal meetings.

Regarding the three-year cycle of deliberations, we agree with the previous speaker that it might be worthwhile to explore whether the current system of three-year cycles is the most effective way to conduct the work of the Commission. If all goes smoothly, the three-year cycle allows member States to deliberate in great depth on specific agenda items, but working according to this extended cycle risks a loss of focus and intensity, especially during the first two years of the cycle. Furthermore, the strenuous efforts of member States over three years might come to naught if the Commission fails to agree on a substantive document at the end of the third-year session, as happened during the last three-year cycle.

One possible approach to dealing with these concerns would be to engage in deliberations on a one-

year basis with the possibility of a one-year extension if necessary. For that purpose we might also consider more specific and focused issues for each year. To avoid annual delays and difficulties in formulating agendas, we could decide on agendas for two or three years into the future. Furthermore, as my delegation pointed out during the general exchange of views, we must be cautious not to allow our lack of progress on one issue to be an excuse for inaction in other areas. My delegation believes that this approach would encourage focused and intensive deliberations. If the Chairs are elected well enough in advance, they could use pre-session consultations to further increase the effectiveness of the one-year deliberation cycle.

Regarding Under-Secretary-General Tanaka's recommendation that experts on specific disarmament issues be invited to plenary meetings, we agree that this could be of benefit and believe that it could be useful to engage such experts in active dialogue.

Finally, although this is not exactly a matter of our working methods, my delegation would like to suggest that the Disarmament Commission website be improved. The current website is largely lacking in useful information. My delegation requests that the Secretariat study ways to improve the Commission website.

Mr. Minami (Japan): I would like to make some remarks on the issues which were raised in plenary meetings last week and today with regard to measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission.

Generally speaking, the cycle of operation and the duration of deliberations each year should be considered taking into account the role and the mandate given to the Disarmament Commission. Japan firmly believes that the current role given to the Commission is extremely important in the field of disarmament and that the mandate should be maintained. On the other hand, taking into consideration the international security environment, which is constantly changing, it might not be very appropriate for us to discuss the same issue for three years. That might not respond appropriately and in a timely manner to the urgent need for international peace and security.

I believe therefore that the idea of one-year deliberations on one appropriate agenda item might deserve due consideration. In that case, three weeks of deliberations each year, as now provided for, would be necessary for the production of recommendations or guidelines at the end of such deliberations. Needless to say, the early election of a Chairman and the formation of the Bureau, as well as the circulation well in advance of the Chairman's non-paper on the item, would be necessary.

Concerning the balance between agenda items, I consider that this can be maintained if each item is, in principle, discussed every two years. In that way, recommendations or guidelines for each agenda item could be produced every two years, which would make it possible for the Disarmament Commission to better respond to the needs of the international community.

That is just a suggestion to be considered in future discussions. Japan is open to any proposal that will contribute to the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Commission. In any case, Japan would like to draw the attention of all delegations to the fact that, when we consider the effectiveness of the methods of work, the financial aspects should be duly considered.

Finally, I would like to point out that Japan attaches great importance to consensus decisions in the disarmament machinery, including, of course, this body.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I just wanted to put on the record a few thoughts about some of the possible ways forward in terms of measures. One thing I think the United States would like very much to see is for the Disarmament Commission to reaffirm the principle of consensus in its deliberations. We are all mindful of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly but, as we all know, the Disarmament Commission deals with international security matters and other matters that cut to the heart of the national security of all of us. In that context, what the rules say on paper is one thing, and what is important for us to embrace as a practical matter and as a political matter is something else again. So, I think that embracing the importance of consensus in our work is something that we should focus on.

In that context, I think that to prevent a recurrence of the experience we had in 2002, where the Disarmament Commission did not meet — and I do not believe that that decision was taken on the basis of consensus — we should reaffirm the importance of the Commission meeting unless the membership takes a formal decision to adjourn.

On the issue of the work cycle and how many issues the Commission should focus on, I think we should explore the concept of the Disarmament Commission perhaps looking at only one issue at a time under a renewable one-year mandate to ensure that a given topic can benefit from an in-depth review by all United Nations Member States. This year, as we saw up until last Thursday, there seemed to be a little bit of a problem with the idea of Commission member States committing the resources necessary for a three-year examination of issues in the nuclear Working Group. So, I think we should look at trying to make consideration of issues, and chairmanships of working groups, open to all Governments — all member States, large and small — not just those Governments that have the manpower necessary to commit to a three-year chairmanship. And perhaps one way to do that is to look at very focused discussions on one issue at a time. If the Commission decides that a particular issue needs more than one year's examination, then so be it; we can roll it over into the following year. But if we can look at something in a year and come up with recommendations in three weeks, then something should not be dragged along because of a fixed three-week issue cycle session, without necessarily having much to talk about for nine weeks spread over a three-year period. I think we should not necessarily throw that off the table right off the bat.

On the issue of early elections, I think that approach is very wise. On the idea of not linking progress in one working group to progress in another: if we had only one working group that would, of course, take care of that issue.

Then, on the representative of the Republic of Korea's idea of improving the Disarmament Commission's website, I think that is a very good idea. The last time I looked, the information there was a little bit outdated, so I think the Department for Disarmament Affairs could take a look at that.

I just wanted to put some of those preliminary thoughts from the United States perspective on the table.

The Chairman: For the benefit of those representatives who arrived after I made the announcement about our future work, I will recall my earlier comments. I will prepare, with the help of the Secretariat, a draft summary of our discussions in the two meetings on this item, which will be circulated to members before the beginning of our next plenary meeting on Wednesday afternoon. That meeting will take the form of an informal plenary, chaired by my friend Ambassador Sylvester Rowe.

If any representatives wish to present statements or express views on this issue in written form, they would be welcome. Indeed, that would help the Secretariat in its effort to sum up our discussions.

Next week will be our last week, so hopefully each of our two Working Groups will be able to prepare a working paper. I hope that we will also have a working paper after Wednesday afternoon's informal meeting on working methods.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt): I have listened attentively to the brief discussion that we have had so far this afternoon with regard to methods of work. Several proposals and ideas are floating around with regard to the number of agenda items, the cycle, the modalities and the financial implications. But one question that was asked in our previous meeting has not yet been answered. What is wrong with the current methods of work? What is it that is not functioning correctly?

The representative of the United Kingdom suggested that we might look at a couple of issues: the length of the cycle and the modalities of the meetings. But we fail to see the logic in the argument that there is something wrong with the length of the current cycle, especially in view of the comments of the representative of Indonesia. Indeed, our current methods of work have been put into practice only once. Does one application of the methods of work provide sufficient lessons for us as we look at changing or revitalizing those methods?

Let us also be clear about something else: the fact that we had no substantive meetings after 2003 was not due to our methods of work. All delegations are quite clear about that and know exactly where the problem lay. The problem lay in our inability to agree on substantive agenda items. It was not the result of a deficiency in the methods of work.

Furthermore, with regard to the financial implications, how would such implications relate to meetings being held in cycles of three years, two years or one year? Or do we want to have sessions once every three years? That, of course, would be a different story. But if this is what we want to achieve, maybe we

should look at cutting expenses in other areas that are not functioning — not functioning at all.

This brings me back to your comment, Mr. Chairman, that you intend to prepare a summary of our discussions. How would that serve our discussion here if it merely recaps what is said at today's meeting and last Thursday? There is a fundamental question that remains unanswered: what is the objective and purpose of the exercise?

So perhaps before engaging in the exercise, we should hold further discussions on this matter. We believe that the idea that you, Sir, proposed of having an informal plenary meeting to discuss this issue could be a useful exercise.

The Chairman: The question raised by the representative of Egypt has been raised by other delegations, too. What is wrong with the current methods of work of the Disarmament Commission? I do not know whether representatives who have spoken so far have tried to answer that question directly. However, many delegations have come up with ideas and proposals for improving the working methods of the Commission. In my opinion, that seems to indicate that there is room for improvement in the working methods of the Commission. I do not know whether there is anything wrong with the working methods of the Commission, but those comments seem to indicate that there is room for improvement. I think that there is room for improvement in anything. We need to utilize the comments, views and suggestions made by delegations during the two meetings. My draft summary of those comments and proposals will serve as a basis for an in-depth discussion, if possible, on Wednesday afternoon, in an informal setting. Whether or not we will be able to work out a final product as a result of the two meetings we have had will also depend on delegates themselves.

We will see how we can sum up all these efforts. Hopefully, my draft summary will help members as they try to agree on an outcome of our discussion. If many representatives believe that there is nothing wrong with our current working methods and there is not much improvement we can make, so be it. Otherwise, there will be a change, with new working methods for the Commission. If there are many members who wish that, then we will make a decision and we will go on. I think that is how I would approach this issue.

Mr. Despax (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like, Mr. Chairman, to lend you my support regarding the methodology you have outlined. I think that it is a stage-by-stage process and I think it is a good idea that we should have a summary of all of the ideas expressed. There are quite a few of them, after all, after two half days of discussion about how to improve our working methods.

It is not a question of whether there are problems in the Disarmament Commission. The point is to listen to what people say. Through their statements, we see that there are a number of practical, concrete ideas, in order better to fulfil the mandate entrusted to us and to make the Commission more effective. So I think, Sir, that your initial summary will be a useful working tool, at least for my delegation.

I would like to seek clarification from you, Sir. You also mentioned a draft non-paper. My understanding of this draft non-paper that will be drafted by the Friends of the Chair will come at a second stage. I am asking you this for the following reason: the European Union (EU) is in a process of formulating proposals, and identifying open questions about this subject. Perhaps by Wednesday afternoon we might be in a position to share our thinking about this. I think these ideas could then be useful to the Friends of the Chair in drafting their summary. What I clearly want to avoid is that in the draft summary you are putting together for Wednesday you do not just have the general ideas that the Austrian EU presidency presented last Thursday, but we do not yet have specific proposals. These will doubtless follow the debate on Wednesday afternoon. So I just want to have some clarification that the non-paper produced by the Friends of the Chair will be published at a later stage, either on Thursday or at the beginning of next week. I would be grateful for some clarification.

The Chairman: Regarding the question of the representative of France, I think I should be using the term conference room paper, rather than non-paper. I think in this Commission we tend to refer to either "conference room paper" or "working paper". The difference is that a working paper is translated into all official languages and a conference room paper is more like a non-paper. That is probably why I used the term non-paper. We will be using the term "conference room paper", and my summary will probably be a conference room paper. Then, based on that, at the informal meeting on Wednesday, we will aim at producing a

working paper or a conference room paper that will later become our final product.

Ms. Majali (Jordan): Of course, my delegation, like the Chair and like other delegations, believes that there is always room for improvement, but if something is functioning well, why tamper with it? When we tamper with something we sometimes risk breaking something that is intact. But then again, we are willing to listen to all delegations in this regard. Of course, as Chairperson, it is your prerogative to present us with any paper, but after listening to all delegations here, we consider that whatever summary is put forward will have to take into consideration that there were delegations that believed that the modalities of work are fine. There were others who suggested that perhaps there is room for change and gave specific proposals in that regard, and there were other members who were quite reluctant to bring about changes.

When we deal with revitalization or when we discuss this very important issue, on what are we going to base our assessment? Why do we need to improve these methods of work? Do they need to be improved? Is that really a way to improve our work, or will it be more of a stumbling block? Or is it only a matter of preference? If there is a preference to have one agenda item rather than two, we would be forgetting about balance, and, here, balance is very important.

There are many issues that need to be taken into consideration when the summary is presented. Is there perhaps a scientific method of assessing the work of the Disarmament Commission, especially bearing in mind what was said by a few delegations here, that we do not really have a long history and that the working methods have only been applied one time since 2000? We do not really have a great deal of history. It is really going to be more of a discussion, rather than coming up with something concrete. Therefore it might be more prudent to make sure that, since we have indeed been able to start our Disarmament Commission meetings after three years, we not risk stalling any future positive developments in this regard.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Mine was a rhetorical question last week when I raised the question of what is wrong with the working methods of the Commission and what were the weaknesses of the Commission. But based on the discussions we have had so far, last week and today, it appears that many delegations believe that we should look at the working methods, that perhaps we need not make a lengthy list of what is wrong with the Commission. When we worked on the revitalization of the First Committee, delegations, inter alia, were saying that maybe some of the resolutions were too long. But, in spite of the fact that we did not have a long list of what was wrong with the First Committee, we were able to come up with something.

Based, as I said, on the discussions we have had so far, there may not be any drastic changes, but at least there will be something on which we can all agree in order to improve matters — as much as possible. In other words, we are not going to reinvent the wheel, but I hope we will be able to come up with something enabling us to say that we have done something. We can make some improvements here and there, taking into consideration those aspects that need not be changed or improved.

One issue raised by a number of delegations so far, including the Japanese delegation — and I think Mr. Tanaka also mentioned it last week — is that we are facing new developments in a greatly changing international situation. The approach may be working at this time, but we have to take the situation into consideration, and not necessarily change the approach, but at least perhaps make some adjustments to it.

I have another issue which does not necessarily relate to the issue we are discussing now, concerning our proposal about the United Nations Disarmament Decade. I should like to raise that issue after we have finished discussing the Chairman's plan.

The Chairman: Let me clarify one matter. We are considering this issue because it is included in our agenda based on an agreement reached among members last year. It was not the Chair who introduced this item for discussion; it was the members themselves who agreed to discuss the issue at this time. So if anyone is asking why we are looking at it, we are looking at it because we agreed to do so.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): My delegation too has listened very carefully to the exchange of views that has taken place today and when we last met. I think that the delegations of Indonesia and Egypt have raised very important points. My delegation too is quite open to considering the ideas that have been put forward, such as the early election of the Chairman and the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, dialogue among the Chairs of the various elements of the multilateral disarmament machinery, and advance presentation of

working papers. Those are all ideas that can certainly be looked into. But, as the delegations of Indonesia and Egypt stated, some of those ideas are not new, but they have been applied only once. That factor has to be kept in perspective as we continue with this exchange of views.

My delegation also would like to associate itself with the remarks made by our Egyptian colleague to the effect that the methods of work of the Commission are working. My delegation feels that they are the same methods of work that contributed to the production of agreed guidelines and recommendations at a couple of previous sessions of the Disarmament Commission. So we also hold the view that there is nothing wrong with the existing methods of work. But at the same time, as the Chairman has said, there is always room for improvement. We will approach the issue in that same spirit: we are prepared to explore ideas and listen to proposals that will contribute to improving the working methods of the Commission.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt): With regard to the issue of working methods, I would like to follow up on a question that was raised by the representative of France with regard to the non-paper — or as the Chairman later said, the conference room paper. Since we are discussing improvement of the working methods of the Disarmament Commission, is it correct that we are talking about three papers, whether we call them conference room papers or non-papers? One is the Chairman's summary; the second is a compilation of proposals in a conference room paper; and the third is a conference room paper by the friends of the Chairman — a third paper that will come after our plenary meeting on Wednesday. It seems odd that we should have three different papers when we are talking about improving our methods of work.

Returning to the issue of our methods of work, I agree fully with everything you have said, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, it was the member States that agreed to include this item for discussion during the 2006 substantive session, based upon the request of our dear colleague the representative of the United States. Thus, we would have expected — since we are talking about efficiency and improving the working methods of the Disarmament Commission — to see some proposals at this early stage of our work. This is the second meeting dedicated to discussion of this issue. So far, we have only listened to general observations, remarks or proposals, but we have not seen anything concrete on which we can work with greater speed that at present. Maybe we should start working on that.

I am still not sure how the three documents fit together, so I would seek some clarification, if possible.

The Chairman: By way of clarification, I would recall that at the beginning of the present session I told members that, down the road, we would like to have two documents for each agenda item: one working paper and one compilation of our discussion. I think that for Working Groups I and II, the working papers will be by way of an outline for the final document we are going to have in two years' time. I think that those four documents will eventually be combined into two in the context of the Commission as a whole: we will have one working paper and one compilation. Thus, for each agenda item we will be working essentially with two papers.

For the issue before us, the Chair's draft summary, which will come out on Wednesday, will just have the purpose of helping us in our informal consultations through next week. Of course, it will be a summary only of the two meetings we have had so far. It will not be proposed as the final compilation document; it will only have the purpose of helping us in our discussion on Wednesday.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I just wanted to make a few points about how we all got to where we are on this issue, and to remind my friend the representative of Egypt that last year this was a United States-suggested process, but that we in this delegation certainly never meant it to be a United States-led process.

In fact, the European Union very quickly agreed that this was a discussion the Disarmament Commission should have. And, as I recall quite vividly, it was the Indonesian delegation that suggested using the word "measures" in our mandate, in other words bringing the idea of actually having a discussion that led to something concrete. So, it was an Indonesian idea that we should discuss the notion of embracing measures at the end of this process. And I think that is exactly where we should be: a very broad and deep discussion, with proposals coming from as many delegations as possible, and not led or pushed by any particular delegation. That is the democratic way.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation has already clarified its position on this issue, but listening carefully to the discussion we have had today I am obliged to repeat some of the points my delegation had already made.

First of all, what we agreed upon in the Commission was to consider this issue. There is no request for any kind of action by us. It is possible for us to take action, but our mandate does not say that the Disarmament Commission should as a matter of certainty make recommendations. If we find that our methods of work are working and when we come to the point of an outcome, certainly at the end we should confirm what we already have. Thus far, in all the discussion and in all the positions that have been stated, we have not heard anybody pinpoint the problems with the present methods of work. The main view that delegations put forward was that, as stated by the Non-Aligned Movement, the main difficulty comes from the lack of political will, not from the issue of the methods of work. As the representative of Indonesia said at today's meeting, the existing methods of work have been implemented only once, from 2000 to 2003. I myself stated at the previous meeting that the result was near-consensus on one issue and a thorough discussion of the other. It is in the nature of the international disarmament forums that some on issues one will not reach consensus. This state of affairs comes about because we have the principle of consensus. Hence, if there is a possibility of discovering areas for change, note that it is the principle of consensus that prevented the previous substantive session of the Disarmament Commission to reach agreement on one of the important issues before it.

My final point relates to the items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. Over a period of some years, the Commission reduced the number of its substantive agenda items from four to two, with the possibility of discussing a third issue. That reflected the wisdom of the Disarmament Commission with a view to keeping a balance between the conventional weapons issue and the issue of nuclear disarmament. It was the result of long and painstaking negotiations. We cannot jump to conclusions. Just because it was applied once and did not result in a satisfactory outcome, we should not necessarily change something that had been decided upon as the result of a long process. We should exercise caution here.

We want to reaffirm that, as stated by the Non-Aligned Movement, the provisions of consensus decision 52/492 remain valid. At the same time, as my delegation has already noted, we are open to discussion on some aspects of the work of the Commission — organizational and technical aspects — and to discovering whether there are possibilities for improving our work.

I think it would be premature to change the whole nature of the Disarmament Commission — something which is the result of so many years of practice.

The Chairman: I can assure members that the Secretariat will do its best to make the Chair's draft summary of our two meetings as balanced as possible. All the views and comments expressed on the floor will be included, including the views of those who do not see the need for this discussion. All views will thus be duly reflected in the summary.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt): I would like to ask your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, and to request you to include in the summary a basic question to which we might try to find an answer in our informal consultations on Wednesday — without any implication of an objection to improving our working methods. Where does the problem lie with the current working methods? That is the basic question we should look at.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Let me make one comment before I turn to the question of the Disarmament Decade. Maybe I should not say anything yet, Mr. Chairman, since you have asked me to assist you in the preparation of the paper, and since I have consented. But, as I said earlier, we do not want to start making a list of what is wrong. I raised the question earlier, as I said, it was a rhetorical question, intended to start us thinking. The intention was not necessarily for us to have a catalogue of what is wrong with the Commission. Also as I said earlier, we already have a feeling — as indicated by some of what the representative of Iran said — that maybe there are certain changes that could be made here and there.

Hence, in my view, the paper should not necessarily include what is wrong with the Commission. Some people have said that they feel that decision 52/492 is valid. Others have put forward new ideas; for instance, I think the representative of Iran mentioned last Thursday that members should provide their working papers in advance. There are new ideas,

and I hope that the Chair's paper will reflect some of those ideas.

We look forward to seeing the European Union (EU) proposal in writing, which I think will help the Chairman, and all of us, a lot. I am not sure of the time frame, but I hope that down the road the Chairman will come up with something — whether a conference room paper or a working paper — that will provide a basis for how the Commission will express itself to the Assembly, saying that it had discussed this issue and this is what it had come up with.

I have not yet taken up my position, but I would like informally to suggest that, when the EU or other delegations submit written suggestions or ideas — I think the Chairman referred to this; I was out of the room at the time — they should be specific. If there are new ideas, it would help us all in this process if they were written down.

The Chairman: I would like to assure the Commission that Ambassador Rowe said exactly what I meant to say. We will include all views, including those supporting the current working methods.

Perhaps Ambassador Rowe would now like to talk about the Disarmament Decade.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): I raised the issue of the United Nations Disarmament Decade last week in the context of our discussion of working methods. Some delegations may feel that that issue does not fall within the ambit of working methods, but I see it in the context of improving the efficient functioning of the Commission. I mentioned the fact that the Commission was given a mandate by the General Assembly, at least for the Third Disarmament Decade.

Should we consider it as a procedural issue or as a substantive issue? As I said, we have not made a formal request, but I think that that might be an idea. I do not know whether we should discuss the issue or hear the views of other delegations in the context of our review of working methods, under another agenda item or as a separate issue, at least at the preliminary stage. My delegation would like to hear views on this.

The Chairman: I will discuss the question raised by Ambassador Rowe with the Secretariat and the Bureau with a view to finding out how to deal with it and whether we are supposed to deal with it here.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): I would like to comment on the proposal made by the representative of Sierra Leone regarding the issue of the Disarmament Decade. I recall that a similar proposal about the Disarmament Decade was made by the Group of 21 quite a long time ago — in 1996, if I am not mistaken — in the Conference on Disarmament. As the issue is closely related to substantive matters, perhaps we could discuss it in Working Group I. That is just a suggestion.

The Chairman: As I said, I will discuss the issue with the Secretariat and with the Bureau, and we will decide on proper forum in which to deal with it.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.275

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

275th meeting

Friday, 28 April 2006, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session

The Chairman: The draft report of the Commission is contained in documents A/CN.10/2006/CRP.5 to CRP.7. These documents have been circulated in English.

In accordance with our agreed working timetable, we will first consider and adopt the report of the Commission and will thereafter hear concluding statements by delegations. To start the process with the consideration and adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items, I shall call on the Chairmen of the two Working Groups to introduce their respective reports. I first give the floor to the chairman of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", to introduce the report of that Working Group (A/CN.10/2006/CRP.6/Rev.1).

Mr. Zinsou (Benin), Chairman of Working Group I (*spoke in French*): The mandate of Working Group I is to deal with agenda item 4, entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". Between 18 and 28 April 2006, the Working Group held seven meetings under my chairmanship. I also conducted a number of consultative meetings. The Working Group had before it more than a dozen documents, which are listed in paragraph 2 of the report which it is my honour to introduce to the Commission.

Two meetings were set aside for a general exchange of views, which proved to be frank and particularly detailed. At the third meeting, delegations put forward working papers, which were commented on by the Working Group. At the fourth meeting, the Chairman introduced a working paper entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". This document drew comment from delegations at the fourth meeting. The Chairman also submitted another document in the form of a conference room paper. Delegations put forward proposals of their own on that document at the fifth meeting, and the Chairman then introduced a revised version of both of these documents at the sixth meeting. He also submitted a third conference room paper, entitled "Draft outline", as document A/CN.10/2006/WG.I/CRP.7.

The Chairman's papers were introduced without prejudging what positions delegations might take and on his responsibility alone. No negotiation was possible on those documents; they did not enjoy consensus. Some delegations lodged reservations as to some subjects in these documents. At the seventh meeting, the Working Group considered and adopted its report on agenda item 4. A decision was also taken to forward the documents set listed in paragraph 2 of the report to the Commission at its 2007 session.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

06-33205 (E)

It should be recalled that on 17 April 2006 that the Commission on Disarmament decided to elect me to the chairmanship of Working Group I with the assent of all Member States. In shouldering that responsibility, keen as I was to salvage a situation embarrassing to all regional groups, I had no doubt as to the complexity of the job awaiting me.

The Working Group, the very day after my election, got down to work. I must stress here that the procedural report that I have just introduced says nothing about a very complex issue that took up a great deal of our time in deliberation. A large majority of the Working Group members reaffirmed the intrinsic link between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and spelled out a number of general principles suitable as guidelines for action by the international community to attain those goals. A number of speakers stressed that nuclear disarmament must go hand in hand with preventing proliferation in all its forms, and that nuclear disarmament must involve gradual and balanced reductions in arsenals while maintaining worldwide strategic stability and undiminished security for all.

A number of delegations stressed that multilateralism is a cardinal principle in this sphere. The report sets forth in bold relief the new threats that have emerged over recent decades and calls for stepped-up, non-discriminatory and non-selective cooperation, among Member States to counter real or alleged attempts to acquire nuclear weapons, in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

A number of speakers emphasized the need not to ignore long-standing threats continuing to weigh over the future of humankind. A number of delegations put forward, in writing or orally, proposals for specific steps to be taken to attain the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

All in all, delegations gave exploratory consideration to a variety of issues bearing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Working Group thus covered a vast range of ideas on how to take stock of progress in this sphere and on proposed recommendations that could be considered by the Working Group as it sought to do its job.

On the request of members of the Working Group, I put forward a summary of proposals made to get the nuclear disarmament process started again and to effectively prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This summary set of recommendations is reflected in the working paper A/CN.10/2006/WG I/WP.4, which is available in all official languages. The major issues broached in this document bear on the following issues: general principles for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and recommendations dealing with nuclear disarmament, security assurances, the role of the Disarmament Conference, the framework for achieving nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear testing, nuclear weapon-free zones, and guarantees of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

I also submitted an outline of the deliberations on these issues as well as a document listing all the issues examined in the aforementioned categories. Contrary to established tradition within this Commission, for reasons of their own and pursuant to the consensus rule, some delegations were opposed to having the three documents submitted by the Chairman annexed to the report that I have just introduced. That is why this report confines itself to the procedural aspects of our work without indicating any of the substance of our deliberations. I believe that I have to some extent compensated for this major constraint. This situation hardly does justice to the tireless efforts of the Chairman and by some delegations which demonstrated great flexibility throughout our work.

However, I invite all disarmament experts to continue to reflect on the issues before us. These issues must be gone into in greater depth in the informal consultations that will take place between the end of this session and the next session in 2007 in order to further develop these ideas and to bring about consensus on proposals that may contribute to eliminating the threat to mankind still posed by nuclear arsenals and to preventing nuclear proliferation in all its aspects.

My country, Benin, is a member of the group of the least developed countries, and, as such, we believe that there is an intrinsic link between disarmament and development. Development is synonymous with peace. I believe that we all share a common determination to contribute to the strengthening of international peace. To that end, it is highly desirable for our States to take the road of dialogue and cooperation to settle their differences in the realm of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

As we near the end of our work, I would like to thank all delegations for their active involvement in the deliberations of Working Group I. Whatever anyone may say, the quality of statements made during our deliberations shows a high degree of professionalism on the part of delegations. This shows that expertise has hardly suffered from years of deadlock within the disarmament machinery.

I should like to pay full tribute to the members of the African Group that entrusted me with the African vice-presidency of the Disarmament Commission. I also thank the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement that supported my candidacy for the chairmanship of the Working Group. I did my duty firmly believing in the vital role of the Movement within the United Nations system. I should like also to express my gratitude to the European Union presidency, currently held by the Republic of Austria.

I wish to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, my deep personal gratitude for your unremitting attentiveness to the deliberations of Working Group I.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the invaluable contribution of Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, friend of the Chair, who placed his mastery of disarmament issues at the service of Working Group I and brought to bear his wealth of wisdom to help us forge consensus on what we managed to achieve at this session.

I would also like to thank the representatives of the Secretariat, in particular, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and its head, Under-Secretary-General Tanaka, and his associates, whose competence and readiness to help were the underpinning of our work. My thanks go also to Mr. Sergei Chernavsky and Mr. Nicolai Rogosaroff, who effectively supported us in our deliberations, as well as to their assistant, Ms. Lidija Komatina.

In conclusion, let me once again express the hope that the Disarmament Commission will survive the ongoing discussions in the General Assembly on the review of mandates — or on the Commission's proposed elimination. In this connection, let us not doubt the determination of States to make use of the deliberative framework it affords to help us make substantive progress in the two years remaining in this new triennial cycle, with a view to fully meeting the expectations of the international community by forging a consensus around crucial issues of international peace and security.

The Chairman: I thank the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Jean-Francis Zinsou, for his statement, from which we can certainly sense how difficult his responsibility was.

In the absence of comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I on agenda item 4 as contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.6/Rev.1.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: We turn now to the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", as contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.7. I give the floor to the Chairman of that Working Group, Mr. Carlos Duarte, to introduce the report of Working Group II.

Mr. Duarte (Brazil): Chairman of Working Group II. Working Group II, which is mandated to deal with item 5 of the Disarmament Commission's agenda, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", held seven meetings in the period between 12 and 28 April 2006. At its first meeting, the Working Group had a general exchange of views and decided to take up a conference room paper to be prepared by me, which would update the previous Chair's consolidated working paper — the fourth revision, of 2003 — which was attached to the report of the Disarmament Commission for 2003 (A/58/42), as a basis for our discussion. Although there was general acknowledgement that the 2003 document had come close to commanding consensus at the time, it was also felt necessary to bring that text up to date. Drawing upon the views and suggestions put forward by delegations, I therefore prepared document A/CN.10/2006/WG.II/CRP.1. That document served as the basis for Working Group II's discussions during this session.

During the subsequent meetings, substantive discussions were held and both general and specific comments, ideas and proposals regarding the conference room paper were presented by many delegations. The Working Group was able to conclude a first reading of the entire conference room paper. During the course of our meetings, and based on the material presented by delegations, I prepared, with the

help of the Secretariat, two revisions of the conference room paper as well as a third, informal, revision that takes into account the work done at our last substantive meeting, which was held yesterday, 27 April, and which I intend to make available to all delegations as of 1 May.

At that same meeting yesterday, as we discussed the draft report of Working Group II to the Commission, it unfortunately became clear that the Group would not achieve consensus on the attachment of the latest version of the conference room paper, A/CN.10/2006/WG.II/CRP.1/Rev.2, to the report. Delegations nevertheless recognized that the conference room paper constituted a significant effort to reflect the state of Working Group II's discussions, and the Group decided to consider the paper as a possible basis for its work at the next session of the Disarmament Commission, in 2007.

I would like very particularly to thank you, Sir, for your support and for your tireless efforts to build consensus among delegations. I also thank delegations, in particular those of my regional group, for the confidence that they placed in me. I should also like to thank the officials of the Secretariat, and very specifically the following officers who helped me in Working Group II: Christa Giles, Pamela Maponga, Hideki Matsuno and Francine Leong.

Despite the fact that Working Group II could not reach consensus on attaching the conference room paper to its report, I believe we had a useful and productive three weeks. I wish to thank all who contributed to the debates, both in substance and in procedure. I am grateful to them, as well as to you, Sir.

I hope that, drawing on the work done this session in Working Group II, the Commission will be able to make further progress on the issue of confidence-building measures at its next session, as there clearly is much scope for agreement and many areas of convergence we can build upon. I also hope that delegations will use the time available until the next session to carefully consider the issues discussed so that work can be promptly resumed in 2007.

The Chairman: As there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II, as contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.7.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Having adopted the report of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, I would like to thank the Chairmen of the two working groups for their dedication. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for their effective leadership in guiding the deliberations of the working groups on two very complex issues.

We will now begin our consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.5/Rev.1.

I have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Coly Seck of Senegal, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (Rapporteur): It is my honour and distinct pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.5/Rev.1.

The draft report consists of four chapters: Introduction, Organization and work of the 2006 substantive session, Documentation, and Conclusions and recommendations.

Let me now turn to the text of the report and draw the attention of delegations to the following corrections.

On page 4, in sub-paragraph 6 of paragraph 1, in the second line, two words — "namely" and "March" — should be deleted. The text would thereby read "three weeks during 2006, from 10 to 28 April".

On page 6, on the fourth line of paragraph 4, the word "member" should be inserted before the word "States". The line would thereby read "representatives of the following member States".

On page 7, the first two lines belong to the footnote from the previous page.

In the sixth line of paragraph 7 on the same page, the words from "on behalf" to "Non-Aligned Movement" should be in parentheses.

In the second line of paragraph 12 on page 8, the word "Chairman" should be in plural.

In accordance with the oral amendment presented by the United Republic of Tanzania, paragraph 7 should be amended to read "the United Republic of Tanzania" instead of "Tanzania".

In accordance with an amendment presented by Sierra Leone, the third line of paragraph 12 should read: "effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work, as well as the reports of Working Groups I and II".

Finally, there is a correction that has been made by China with regard to the reference to the working paper submitted by that country. Instead of "2003", it should read "2006".

As is customary, the final report is a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part comprises the two reports of the working groups that were just adopted by the Commission and which are part of the present report. That part is a reflection of the compromises and agreements reached by delegations through delicate negotiations played out in the spirit of constructive cooperation.

Despite the fact that the Commission has discussed three items at this session, no parallel meetings were held and I was privileged to closely watch the three Chairmen and delegations skilfully and step by step crafting a consensus on complex issues of the modern disarmament agenda. The two reports of the working groups, although not perfect or fully satisfactory to everybody, will serve as a good basis for further discussion. The inability to adopt the reports by consensus was due to the complexity of the issues, and not to a lack of effort on the part of delegations.

On agenda item 4, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", I can say that it was a welcome occurrence that the dialogue on that complex issue was vigorously pursued within the framework of the Disarmament Commission. The Commission, with its deliberative mandate, allows practical and action-oriented consideration, as well as broad philosophical and conceptual approaches to the issues without negotiating pressure. From that perspective, all submitted working papers, conference room papers and oral and written comments constitute a rich background against which the Group operates.

Here, I wish to emphasize the valiant efforts of the Chairman of the Working Group. Thanks to his unfailing belief in the possibility of success and his readiness to act on his convictions, nothing was lost from that repository of ideas.

On agenda item 5, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", a valiant effort was undertaken by the Chairman to present the Group with a non-paper right at the start of the meetings this year. Building on positive elements achieved during previous years, the Chairman took the Group down the path of steady progress. Despite differences, it was possible to find a compromise. That in itself is a major achievement that keeps the disarmament momentum alive within the Commission.

For the skilful leadership that he provided for the Working Groups, the Chairman deserves our deep gratitude. I wish to take this opportunity to say that it has been a great honour to serve as the Rapporteur at this session and, in particular, to work under the able leadership of our Chairman, Ambassador Oh Joon. It was a pleasure and an enriching experience to participate in the work of the Bureau together with the Vice-Chairmen and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, who provided effective and expert guidance for the deliberations of the subsidiary bodies.

Finally, allow me to express my gratitude to Mr. Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the counsel and support that he provided to the Bureau and to member States. Let me also express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance. I would also like to thank the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, the Secretaries of the Working Groups and the members of the Disarmament Commission staff assisting the deliberations.

With those brief remarks, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report as contained in document A/CN.10/2006/CRP.5/Rev.1, as orally revised.

The Chairman: In addition to the revisions the Rapporteur has just mentioned, there was another revision, which came from the representative of Egypt, regarding paragraph 12 of the draft report. It will be duly reflected in the report.

Are there any comments on the draft report?

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt): I too would like to thank the Rapporteur of the Commission for his introduction of the draft report. Would the Chairman kindly indicate how the revision to paragraph 12 will be indicated?

The Chairman: Paragraph 12, as revised will read as follows:

> "At its 275th plenary meeting, on 28 April, the Disarmament Commission considered the draft report of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission on measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work, as well as the reports of Working Groups I and II, on agenda items 4 and 5, respectively. The reports of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein, are included in section 4 of the present report."

The Chairman: If there are no other comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft report of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/2006/CRP.5/Rev.1), as orally revised.

The draft report, as orally revised, was adopted.

Concluding statements

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Let me commend you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, for your efforts and for the extraordinary patience that you have demonstrated. I think patience is part of leadership, and you demonstrated real leadership during the course of our deliberations over the past three weeks.

All of us will be reporting to our respective Governments and authorities on the proceedings and outcome of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission. The papers and reports that we have adopted are addressed to ourselves and our Governments. However, they will be read by others. Those others will be asking obvious questions. They will not be interested in the details of our deliberations: the number of papers that we presented, whether they were working papers or conference room papers or whether they would be attached or forwarded or submitted to the General Assembly. They will not be interested in the hours of argument over the use of definite and indefinite articles — what one could call fiddling with linguistics while the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as conventional weapons, continues to threaten humankind. They will not be interested in all of that. They will not be interested in the repetitive reaffirmation of the functions of the Disarmament Commission, as if after 24 years no one knew what the Commission is all about or why it was established.

Average people, all of whom are stakeholders in the struggle for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, will be asking: What did the 2006 Disarmament Commission session achieve? Did it advance the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation? Did it draw us closer to the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament? Let me briefly summarize my delegation's views.

First, the fact that the Commission met at all is an achievement, considering the fact that, for almost three years, it was unable to meet because it had no agenda. This has been a landmark development for which we should applaud ourselves. I should like to pay tribute to the various delegations that contributed to the efforts to make that happen.

However, my delegation feels that that is not enough. The Commission was mandated by the General Assembly to submit a substantive report to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Are we doing that? My delegation, I must say, is disappointed that the Commission was unable to give due relevance, at least, to the working paper of the Chairman of Working Group I, I am referring to working paper 4, revision 1. That should have been given the importance it deserves. We gutted it, as a non-binding framework — I emphasize that phrase: non-binding framework — for the future work of the Commission. After all, we said that we are not negotiating any legally binding instrument, since this is a deliberative organ. Perhaps we should have come up with resolutions, like the First Committee.

I should like to commend the various delegations that presented papers. I said earlier — yesterday, I believe — that there were too many papers. However, while I do not want to name delegations, let me say that my delegation was impressed by the quality of the some of the papers we received during the session. They were to the point, and there were no lengthy narratives about the functions of the Commission. We know what the functions of the Commission are. The papers contained specific recommendations with which we may not agree, but at least there were recommendations made on which we could have built as the basis for our work in the coming years.

Whatever happens, whatever the political status of the papers of the Chair, of the working groups and

of member States, it is my delegation's hope that those papers will not be discarded and that we will use them as the basis of our work at the 2007 substantive session. This is the first step in a three-year cycle. We have only just begun. But we must remember that the threat to humanity that we all want to eliminate still looms large and is even increasing.

The Chairman: I am sure that I inherited my patience from the previous Chairman.

Mr. Charwath (Austria): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the European Union (EU), I would like to thank you very much and congratulate you on your able guidance and the stewardship that you have provided throughout the proceedings of this session of the Disarmament Commission.

I would also like to thank, through you, the Chairmen of both working groups for their excellent work and for the great efforts they made under very difficult circumstances. The EU very much appreciates their personal engagement and their sincere efforts to bring our work forward. Let me here also add a word of thanks to Ambassador Rowe in his capacity as a friend of the Chair and informal friend of the Chair of Working Group I, at some point. Together, under your leadership, we have been able to agree on some additional measures to improve the working methods of the Commission, and we hope that they will help in that respect.

We did set out at the beginning to restart our discussions after a two-year break in our substantive proceedings due to a lack of agreement on an agenda. In that sense we did get ahead, because we did certainly talk, and a number of issues came up during our discussions.

The European Union has said on previous occasions that we would like the Disarmament Commission to fulfil its important role as the sole universal membership body dealing with disarmament issues — except for the First Committee — to discuss and come up with concrete recommendations. I have to say, though, that given the way that our discussions have gone in the past few weeks, we are not fully convinced that we have achieved that yet.

We will meet again next year, in 2007, to continue our discussions, and we very much hope that we will be able to make progress then. I wish to thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for your work, as well as the Secretariat, the interpreters and everyone else who helped us, sometimes working late, even after hours, and everyone else who contributed to this debate.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, our sincere congratulations on the outstanding manner in which you have been guiding the work of the Commission during this session. Let me also congratulate the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II, who showed unending patience, great professionalism and a deep commitment to their very difficult tasks.

Concerning Working Group I, with regard to the item on "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", my delegation believes that the documents submitted by the Chairman contain certain elements that are invaluable indeed and that Cuba supports fully.

Cuba views the issue of nuclear disarmament as having, now and in future, the highest priority in the field of disarmament, until such day that such weapons have vanished from the face of the earth or been forever banned.

However, we should like to note that the documents prepared by the Chairman of Working Group I contain other elements that my delegation does not support. In that connection, we should like explicitly to place on record our reservations as to paragraph 19 of document A/CN.10/2006/WG.I/CRP.1 and Rev.1*. That paragraph states that the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSE) and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative enjoy full support. However, that is not the case at all.

I should like to reiterate that Cuba, along with other countries, does not support the initiative. In fact, my delegation has, in various forums, submitted working documents detailing our stance on the PSE. We believe that that initiative, promoted outside the framework of the United Nations, contains elements that are inconsistent with the principles of international law.

With regard to Working Group II, my delegation regrets that, owing to the position of one delegation, the text prepared by the Chairman (A/CN.10/2006/CRP.1/Rev.2) is not annexed to the Group's report. We hope that that document, together

with the comments and proposals on it presented by delegations — including the delegation of Cuba — will be used as a basis for discussion when our work resumes in 2007.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Cuba's full support for the Disarmament Commission, a body that has an extremely relevant role in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The mere fact that we have a body in which we can deliberate in depth on disarmament issues that have important implications for all Member States is very illustrative of the Commission's usefulness.

I must say that Cuba listened with much concern to the statement made in the General Assembly by a powerful State member of the Commission earlier this week during the discussions taking place in the context of the mandates review process. That State characterized the Disarmament Commission as an obsolete, irrelevant body and proposed its elimination. I wish to place clearly on record Cuba's position against that proposal. We will firmly maintain that position in the General Assembly's discussions on the mandates review.

I would like to conclude by once again thanking you, Mr. Chairman, the other members of the Bureau, the Chairmen of the Working Groups and the Secretariat team for the good work accomplished.

Mr. Soemirat (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

First, allow me to express our gratitude and appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for your able and effective leadership in steering the work of the Disarmament Commission this year. The NAM countries continue to underscore the importance of the Commission and of other multilateral disarmament mechanisms in dealing with questions of disarmament and related international security issues. It is imperative to consider the Commission as a forum for balanced and comprehensive deliberation on those issues, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. In our opinion, it is also important that all delegations continue the process of such deliberation at the next session of the Commission, in 2007.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, let me also thank the other members of the Bureau, especially the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II, and the Secretary of the Committee and his staff for all their hard work and cooperation during our exercise this year.

Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement remains committed to promoting international security and peace through disarmament measures. That is why we believe that multilateralism remains the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues. It is our hope that multilateralism within the United Nations framework will provide the impetus needed to move the disarmament agenda forward in our future endeavours.

Mr. Prins (Netherlands): Let me try to add a few words of realism.

My delegation has found this year's session of the Disarmament Commission to be largely superfluous; it has shown again that agreeing on an agenda does not in any way mean that progress can be achieved. We find that meetings such as these come close to being an insult to our taxpayers. Let me stress that that is in no way due to a lack of effort on your part, Mr. Chairman, on the part of the other Chairs and friends of the Chair, or on the part of the Secretariat.

The Netherlands attaches and will continue to attach great importance to disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we will, in the coming year, consider our presence at next year's session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Minami (Japan): I would like to join other delegations in expressing our deepest gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman; to Mr. Zinsou and Mr. Duarte, the Chairmen of Working Group I and Working Group II, respectively; and to Ambassador Rowe, who was a friend of the Chair in the discussion on working methods. My delegation believes that, because of your good guidance and competence, we were able to reach consensus on additional measures for improvement of our work, and our deliberations got off to a very good start and have produced a good basis for our deliberations next year and the year thereafter. We express once again our appreciation for your tireless and productive endeavours in carrying out those difficult tasks.

Mr. Zhang Xiaohong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairmen of

the two Working Groups for the successful completion of our session this year.

I would like to reiterate that China has always attached importance to the role and the status of the Disarmament Commission. We would be pleased to work together with all other members to ensure that the Commission can make a greater contribution to the process of advancing the cause of arms control and disarmament and thereby enhancing peace and stability.

We wish to assure the Commission that we will carefully study the document submitted by the Chairman and the working papers submitted by delegations. We believe that they will form a good basis for our deliberations next year.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): Our delegation would like to thank the representatives of Benin, Brazil and Sierra Leone and, of course, you, Mr. Chairman, for your dedicated efforts to guide the work of the Commission during the past three weeks. We also wish to acknowledge the important contributions of our colleagues in the Secretariat, particularly on those occasions when they continued to work as one or another Working Group ran beyond its allotted time.

As delegations know well, Mr. Chairman, diplomacy is a political exercise. In that context, your able service deserves special mention. Multilateral disarmament endeavours need more individuals such as yourself — practical, realistic dealmakers — and could do with far fewer would-be lay theologians, that is, those enraptured with every jot and tittle of every disarmament-related text, statement and proclamation since the cooling of the Earth. It is such rigid zeal, not the lack of so-called political will, that is slowly but surely destroying the ability of multilateral disarmament institutions to fulfil their important functions. Those bodies also are under threat by radical regimes that cynically manipulate and abuse those organizations for their own devious ends.

Our delegation regrets the fact that the Asian Group, with dozens of member States, could identify no Government other than the Islamic Republic of Iran for the so-called Asian seat in the Bureau of the Commission. The United States went along with that Kakfaesque absurdity in the interest of consensus and because, frankly, the Commission's international reputation did not merit a major fuss. Nonetheless, it remains on the record that the Commission — a body supposed to promote nuclear disarmament, among other issues — elected, as one of its Vice-Chairmen, a Government which the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has on numerous occasions found to be out of compliance with both its IAEA and Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) obligations.

Indeed, the IAEA Board of Governors in February reported Iran's non-compliance with its Treaty obligations to the Security Council, and Mr. ElBaradei's report to the Security Council today confirmed that Iran continues to refuse to comply with the steps required under the February IAEA decision and the presidential statement issued by the Council on 29 March.

Statements this week by senior Iranian officials, reflected in the activities of Iran's delegation in this body over the past three weeks, indicate continuing defiance by Tehran of the will of the international community. This is unacceptable behaviour by a rogue regime.

Our delegation takes this opportunity to urge the Iranian regime, even at this eleventh hour, to reverse course and return to compliance with its Treaty obligations, in the interests of international peace and security. Among other actions, Iran must undertake a complete suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and provide the IAEA with the extended transparency and cooperation that the Board of Governors has repeatedly requested.

Beyond that, the Disarmament Commission has had a poor record since 2000. The Commission did not meet at all in 2002, failed to adopt consensual recommendations in 2003, failed to adopt an agenda in 2004, and finally adopted an agenda only in December 2005. Delegations this year began to address the agreed agenda topics. Regrettably, however, consensus continues to elude us.

That absence of consensus has been most apparent in Working Group I, where far too many representatives continue to promote falsehoods and failed nostrums dating back decades to a cold war that no longer exists. Our delegation continues to believe that international cooperation on disarmament in all its forms cannot be enhanced before States Members of the United Nations can agree to set aside past differences and determine to work together to address

modern threats to international peace and security. Chief among those, of course, is the immediate and urgent threat posed by rogue States and terrorist organizations seeking to acquire nuclear weapons and related delivery systems and technologies.

As our delegation stated at the first meeting of Working Group I, achieving effective nuclear non-proliferation in today's world is the essential element for establishing the international security conditions necessary for the effective pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We hope that, upon review of the divergent proposals submitted in Working Group I, Governments will reflect and make the right decisions concerning the future direction of our deliberations on the nuclear agenda item.

Our delegation was disappointed in the fact that the same delegation that blocked consensus on the conventional issue in 2003 chose to compound the damage this year by again proposing measures that clearly do not enjoy consensus within this body — disappointed, of course, but not surprised, since our delegation, since 2004, had predicted publicly that a decision by the Commission to return to this subject would result in the outcome that we have witnessed here this year.

We regret that Non-Aligned delegations in particular did not have the vision to support alternative proposals for the conventional item during 2004 and 2005, such as those circulated by the United States, the European Union and other Governments. In hindsight, we can only recall the wisdom of the observation made by the delegation of India just three weeks ago that the 2003 draft document on conventional confidence-building measures contained many political compromises that would not withstand wholesale efforts at amendment this year.

That said, member States will have a year to review the current draft text to determine whether it can be salvaged or whether it would be best to return to the drawing board.

Our delegation remains grateful that the Disarmament Commission agreed last year to endorse the proposal made by our Government that the Commission review its internal workings to see if they could be improved. In candor, however, too many delegations seemed unwilling to move beyond decision 52/492.

In joining consensus on the related draft recommendations, our delegation can only hope that, if they are adopted by the General Assembly, they will have a salutary effect on the Disarmament Commission, as resolutions 58/41 and 59/95 — both initiatives of our Government — have had on the methods of work of the First Committee.

Finally, our delegation wishes to call attention to an important development with potential implications for the future of this body. Earlier this week, a resolution was submitted in the United States Senate that calls for the United States to withdraw from the Commission and to withhold further payments to the United Nations in its support. Our delegation obviously cannot speculate on the prospects for passage of that legislation, but we would observe that the activities of the Disarmament Commission finally appear to have captured the attention of the United States Congress, and not in a good way, from the Commission's perspective. In sum, it has taken member States three years to arrive at this moment. Capitals will now need to reflect on whether those efforts, and our activities here this year, merit continued pursuit, or if the Disarmament Commission finally has outlived its usefulness.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to begin by placing on record our sincere gratitude to you for the diplomatic skill, transparency and integrity that you demonstrated in the course of this session of the Disarmament Commission. Let me also associate my delegation with other delegations in expressing our thanks to the Chairs of the Working Groups. It was a pleasure and an honour for my delegation to work with you, Sir, in the Bureau.

We regret that the Working Groups, despite the will of the overwhelming majority of member States to attach papers by the Chairs to the reports of the Groups, were unable to attach such working papers to their reports due to the opposition of the United States delegation.

It is no wonder that the United States has been trying, and is still trying, to create smokescreens in this meeting and in others to deflect attention from its abysmal record on nuclear disarmament. When in 1995 a consensus was achieved around the principles and objectives governing the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(NPT), it was based on a solemn undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue systematic efforts to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. States parties were assured that from that point on accountability would be the cornerstone of the NPT.

Allow me to briefly give a few examples of non-compliance with the NPT by the United States, which is now the self-proclaimed champion of compliance. The United States has adopted a Nuclear Posture Review which incorporates a breach of its obligations on irreversibility, on the diminished role of nuclear weapons and on lowering the operational status of nuclear weapons. It has done this by: stressing the essential role of nuclear weapons as an effective tool for achieving security ends and foreign policy objectives; developing new nuclear weapons systems and constructing new facilities for producing nuclear weapons; resuming efforts to develop and deploy tactical nuclear weapons despite the commitment to reverse that process and effectively reduce the numbers of such weapons; and targeting non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT and planning to attack those States.

The United States has replaced the principle of destruction — perceived as the most fundamental element in the process of nuclear disarmament — with a policy of decommissioning. The United States has abrogated the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), recognized by the international community as the cornerstone of global strategic stability, through its unilateral withdrawal from the Treaty. The United States continues the deployment of nuclear forces in other territories, raising serious concerns about the command and control of such weapons; this constitutes a clear violation of article I of the NPT.

The United States has continued to provide a nuclear umbrella for non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT — a flagrant violation of articles I and II of the NPT by the United States and by countries hosting such weaponry. In 2000, the United States signed an agreement on nuclear cooperation with Israel, whose nuclear arsenal presents the gravest danger to the peace and stability of the Middle East, providing Israeli scientists access to its nuclear facilities, thereby demonstrating its total disregard for its obligations under the NPT.

The United States has rejected the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), not only damaging the prospects for the entry into force of the Treaty but also undermining the promotion and upholding of the CTBT in international forums.

Last but not least, the United States has rejected the inclusion of the element of verifiability in a future fissile materials cut-off treaty, thereby breaching a long-standing consensus position of the international community on a negotiating mandate in the Conference on Disarmament.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the ability to develop and pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The three pillars of the NPT — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the ability to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear energy — are intertwined. They need to be followed together, without diminishing the significance and effectiveness of any one pillar compared with the others.

Above all, the Commission should pay attention to the following areas: ensuring the full universality of the NPT without a single exception; rejecting any perception or policy anywhere in the world which puts forward nuclear weapons as a means of achieving individual and collective security; strengthening collective and coordinated efforts to check proliferation, vertical or horizontal; improving safeguards and supporting the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its supervision of nuclear activities; emphasizing security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, thereby removing concerns about a nuclear threat; and enabling States parties to exercise their full right to develop and produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under appropriate international monitoring and supervision.

The vice-chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Iran was endorsed by 45 countries of the Asian Group, for which we are very thankful. Those 45 independent countries are politically mature and wise enough to recognize what is appropriate for them. They do not need somebody outside of the region dictating to them what to do. The Commission, on the first day of this substantive session, respected the decision of the Asian Group and decided to elect the Islamic Republic of Iran as a Vice-Chair of the Commission, as reflected in the official records of the Commission (see A/CN.10/PV.269). It seems that it has become the habit

of the United States first to accept a decision in an international forum and then to refuse to comply with it.

If anything is wrong with the Bureau of the Commission, it is the election of Israel — a threat to peace and security for the peoples of the Middle East — as a member of the Bureau of the Disarmament Commission over the years. Israel has already violated every single Security Council resolution that has been adopted about the Middle East. It has constantly refused to denounce nuclear weapons and to sign the NPT.

It is worth mentioning that the only existing obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the non-adherence of Israel to the NPT and its continued clandestine operation of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, with the help and technological assistance of the United States. Israel has paid no attention to the constant international calls in different forums, particularly the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which called upon that regime by name to accede to the NPT immediately and without condition. The Israeli regime has never been a party to the international instruments on weapons of mass destruction — the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Israeli nuclear threat and its missile capability are a real threat to the peace and stability of the region and the world.

While we have those concerns, we respect the decision of the respective regional groups, unlike the United States delegation. But it seems that the United States double standards have become even worse and changed into double discriminatory standards, according to which a State party with peaceful nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, and which has accepted 2,000 inspector-days of inspection and is a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, cannot become a Vice-Chair of the Disarmament Commission, but a delegation that has never been a party to the international instruments on weapons of mass destruction and continues to operate nuclear weapons facilities clandestinely is suitable for such a post.

As for Iran, it is committed to the NPT and the non-proliferation regime and will spare no effort in that regard.

I would like to draw the Commission's atte to some of the reports of the IAEA that clearly me the non-diversion of Iranian activities. The va reports issued by the IAEA Director-General November 2003 have confirmed that "To date, th no evidence that the previously undeclared nu material and activities ... were related to a nu weapons programme" (*GOV/2003/75, para. 52*). same conclusion can be found in the IAEA's Feb report. Paragraph 53 of that report repeats the IA previous conclusion that, "As indicated to the Boa November 2004, and again in September 2005, a declared nuclear material in Iran has been acco for" (*GOV/2006/15*). Even today's report of the I reaffirms that conclusion. The Agency reaffirms again in paragraph 53 of the February 2006 repor it "has not seen any diversion of nuclear materi nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive device

Let me conclude my remarks by thanking again, Sir, for your patience and by thanking Chairmen of the working groups for their patience dedication.

The Chairman: I would like to re representatives that, in subsidiary bodies of the Ge Assembly like ours, the usual suggested time lim seven minutes. I would appreciate it if representa could abide by that.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): I promise you, Sir, t will be through within a minute.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank as well as the two Chairs of the working groups your hard work and sincere efforts. I would also li thank the Secretariat for a very good job.

My delegation is obliged to respond t comment addressed to us. I would just like to note it was our delegation which presented a paper in 2 and another paper this year. We presented it in g faith. It has been commented upon and sev elements of it have been taken on board in the re We recognize the right of every delegation to disa with any of the comments or any of the working pa presented by any member of this Commission, bu find it interesting and regrettable that one delega has also presented a working paper which is full number of proposals that are difficult, to put it mi for a number of delegations in the Disarma Commission.

I just thought I would note the discrepancy that, while one delegation is characterized as not being helpful to the work of the Commission, at the same time another chooses to present one paper which is full of the same difficulties.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): Our delegation would like briefly to comment on some of the remarks just delivered by the representative of Iran.

Obviously, there is a lot on which we differ and there are some issues on which we shall not comment because that Government has the right to hold its national positions, as we do our own. But there are some statements that are not true, and when it comes to issues that are related to nuclear affairs, as our delegation stated before the first main committee of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year, when Governments or individual representatives make certain assertions, they are either ignorant of the facts or are liars.

In that regard, we would like to comment on some of the following remarks.

The United States has stated publicly and repeatedly — most recently at last year's NPT Review Conference, barely 11 months ago, in this room — that the United States does not target any non-nuclear-weapon State. We also made clear during our presentation at that time that the activities of the United States with our partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were debated at the time that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was adopted. All Governments were aware of that and the activities in which we participate are perfectly legal within the Treaty and therefore do not violate articles I and II, as asserted by Iran.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we take this opportunity to reiterate our position that the United States opposes the Treaty and will not become a party to it. We remind delegations that the only reason that the CTBT Organization's Preparatory Committee exists is because the United States voluntarily participates in 95 per cent of the activities of the international monitoring system, to which we pay in excess of $20 million a year, accounting for 22 per cent of that budget. Any time that delegations would like us to leave their pristine organization to themselves, I cannot speak exactly for the United States Government, but I suspect that all delegations would need to do is ask.

What else? There is just so much. Ah, yes; let us talk about the vice-chairmanship.

The Vice-Chairman talks about our having dictated. Obviously, we did not dictate, because you got elected. We did not object. We have not made a motion during the three weeks. And there you are sitting with your nice Vice-Chairman placard in front of your desk. So feel free to take the floor again; you are just going to look like a fool. We have not interfered in this.

In so far as the statement that Israel is the only obstacle to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, everyone knows that that is not a factual statement. I shall not belabour it.

Double discrimination standards .... That is enough. We just do not have time to deal with that kind of stuff.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I apologize for taking the floor. I would just like to respond to at least one of the claims of the United States delegation regarding not threatening or targeting non-nuclear-weapon States.

In that regard, on Tuesday, 18 April 2006 — very recently — in a question-and-answer session in the White House, on being asked whether United States options regarding Iran "include the possibility of a nuclear strike" and whether his Administration is planning for such a prospect, President George W. Bush refused to rule out a United States nuclear strike on Iran. Instead he replied, "all options are on the table".

Such dangerous statements, in particular at this time, are widely considered, in political and media circles, as tacit confirmation of the shocking news of the Administration's possible contemplation of nuclear strikes against a non-nuclear-weapon State, namely Iran.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): In fact, my delegation did not plan to take the floor, or at least, it planned to take the floor just to begin by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for your able guidance, as well as the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II.

When we stood here three weeks ago, at the point of departure, we were encouraged by the fact that this body had begun to deal with more interesting subjects — at least in the opinion of my delegation — particularly in Working Group I, where we were to deal, for the first time, with the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which is dear to our delegation and our State, in view of the current and emerging threats. We were also encouraged by, and willing to participate constructively in, the debate on confidence-building measures, as we view them as part of the possible ways ultimately to achieve peace and security, which is the final goal of any disarmament process.

We would also like to extend our special thanks to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, who made a magnificent effort — which was fruitful in the end — to try to bridge gaps and successfully adopt a report.

I could have ended my statement just like that, as well, of course, as by thanking the members of the Secretariat, who have provided a lot of guidance during these three weeks.

However, unfortunately, I cannot end my statement there, in view of some accusations that have been made against my State and people. In fact, we are not surprised that this is turning into a forum that again accuses Israel for many, many things that it has never done.

Let me begin by saying that Israel supports the First Committee's resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, notwithstanding the many reservations we have on that resolution, because we support the eventual establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We believe that we can support that resolution; we are part of the consensus on it. So there is no doubt that Israel is also committed to the eventual establishment of that zone.

However, the unfortunate reality is that we live in a neighbourhood and region in which the President of Iran is still daily calling for the destruction of my country — for wiping Israel from the map — instigating terrorism and denying the Holocaust. That certainly does not bring us closer to even beginning to consider the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Added to that are Iran's violations and the defiant way in which it reacts to all international demands set out by the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency's Boar of Governors.

It is not Israel that is painting that picture. That acknowledged by the international community.

Finally, we are again not surprised that Iran trying to deflect the main focus of the internationa community from the real problem. The real problem Iran's emerging threat to international peace an security arising from its nuclear programme. I thin that, aside from Iran, no other delegation here convinced that Iran is looking towards peace. Th evidence speaks for itself.

Once again, trying to use common Unite Nations practices of being elected to a chairmanshi and calling them absurd or audacious, is certainly no worthy of any reaction from my country. In a way, tha again serves to question the validity of th Disarmament Commission, whether it is just anothe forum for exchanges of accusations aimed at on country, like Israel.

The Chairman: I know everyone is taking th floor to compliment the Chairman. I can tell you that am flattered and that I need no more compliment Under-Secretary-General Tanaka needs to speak befor 6 p.m., and I need to my make my concluding remark before 6 p.m. I would therefore like to appeal t members to make their statements short.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): In th interest of brevity, I would like to comment briefly o semantic distinctions.

The statement about what the President said o 18 April is somehow equated with Columbus discovering the New World. The United States is ver consistent about this. There is another less-reported about statement of 18 April by the President of Iran i his speech marking Army Day, in which he talke about "cut off the hand of any aggressor and place th sign of disgrace on their forehead". Not very peace loving. More to the point, we recall for delegations th 13 April statement "Be angry at us and die of th anger". Finally, we recall the closing remark made b the delegation of Iran, in its first statement thi afternoon, about how that Government spares no effo to promote nuclear non-proliferation. Given you record, on behalf of the international community please spare us your effort.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. Chairman, you and the other members of the Commission all witnessed that it was not the delegation of Iran that started this political discussion and dispute; it was the United States delegation, which would like to misuse each and every opportunity in order to pursue its political objectives, even through a multilateral forum.

In the past 250 years, Iran has never threatened any other country. A number of remarks, taken out of context and misused in politically motivated propaganda supported by the United States and Israel, are baseless and are used as a means to pursue a hidden agenda of those two regimes.

The Chairman: Believe it or not, we still have another agenda item left, item 7, "Other business". Does any delegation wish to speak on this item? I see none.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Tanaka (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I believe I would be less than candid if I did not characterize this session as a very difficult one. After a long impasse, we came to the stage of holding this session of the Disarmament Commission. I think that that is a good thing. After all, the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation are very long-term in nature, and progress is very slow. This is a deliberative body, and it is good when Member States listen to the views of other Member States. Moreover, it is an encouraging, albeit small, step for the Commission to recommend some measures for improving the efficiency of its working methods. I hope that that will be a good catalyst for further meaningful deliberations of the Commission in the future.

I must say that it is not easy to restore lost trust and lost confidence among Member States, which ruptured the two important occasions last year. Clearly, I still see some difficulties in moving the disarmament agenda forward in the future. Yet my Department is totally committed to serving the members of the Commission as they guide us. We stand ready to help in any direction that they would like to pursue.

Last but not least, I cannot end my remarks without saying how grateful we are to the Chairman; to the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II, Mr. Zinsou of Benin and Mr. Duarte of Brazil; and to the friend of the Chair, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe, for their tireless efforts to ensure that this Commission remains a coherent body. I am particularly grateful for their admirable stewardship of the Commission. Thanks to them, we have successfully maintained a certain coherence in the Commission thus far. Once again, I thank them for their guidance. We stand ready to help them in any direction that they would like to pursue in the very difficult and yet lofty objective of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Chairman: Distinguished delegates: before closing this session, I should like to share with you some of my personal thoughts regarding my chairmanship over the past three weeks.

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for having worked so hard and earnestly for the past three weeks to find common ground on the extremely difficult, but also tremendously important, issues we are dealing with. Indeed, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are quintessential questions that affect all of us and therefore require common endeavours on our part to address them.

Whether we like it or not, and wherever we stand on these issues, none of us can avoid the realities we are facing: the reality that we have stockpiles of weapons that can kill all of us many times over; the reality that, regardless of the size of our arsenals, the money spent on weapons could feed countless starving people; the reality that we try to build up our own military power while asking others to reduce theirs; the reality that we are moving towards a more dangerous world as more and more of us acquire more powerful weapons; and the reality that we are often frustrated because we cannot do much about any of those realities.

However, I believe that our efforts in this Commission are all the more important because of those realities, not despite them. As we continue to discuss disarmament and non-proliferation, we play an important role as a constant reminder of the realities that the international community has to face. It would be even better if we could reach full agreement on how to deal with these critical issues. But even without such an agreement, the discussions we have and the efforts we make to narrow the gaps among us are invaluable.

Especially at this session, I am glad that we made progress — albeit modest progress — in our work. We were able to agree on new measures to improve our working methods, and the consideration of our two agenda items formed a good basis on which to continue our work in 2007 and 2008. I am sure that the credit for those achievements should go to all representatives for their sincere spirit and constructive work.

My heartfelt thanks go to the two Working Group Chairs, Mr. Zinsou and Mr. Duarte, who volunteered to take up those tough responsibilities from the beginning and who spared no effort in moving our deliberations forward. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the friend of the Chair, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, for his great contribution to our work, based on the wisdom and expertise gained during his chairmanship of the Commission. I further thank all the members of the Bureau for their contribution to the work of the Commission.

Under-Secretary-General Nobuaki Tanaka, despite the fact that he arrived at the United Nations only recently, has been extremely active in his interest and participation in the work of the Commission. On behalf of the Commission, I extend to him our sincerest appreciation.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the Secretariat for their hard work and professionalism, in particular the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management team, led by Mr. Timur Alasaniya, and the Department for Disarmament Affairs team, led by Mr. Ioan Tudor, as well as the interpreters, conference officers and documents officers. I wish them all the best in their future work.

Closure of the session

The Chairman: I declare closed the 2006 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.